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THE UNITED STATES AND SANTO DOMINGO,
1789-1866

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The twentieth century has witnessed the awakening of a new interest on the part of the United States in the island of Santo Domingo, an interest stimulated by the wave of imperialism which has swept through the western world and which has caused the United States to feel, with especial force since the building of the Panama Canal, that the Caribbean is an American sea and to covet for the defense of its great waterway the guardianship of the islands which dot the American Mediterranean.

But, though the cause of the interest in this little West Indian island may be new, the interest itself is almost as old as American history and has passed through phases of greater intensity than the present. During the eighteenth century the trade between the North American colonies and Santo Domingo constituted one of the most important economic factors in colonial life and development; while in the critical last decade of that century, when American history was almost synonymous with the record of foreign affairs, the interaction of the two countries upon each other did much to change the destiny of each. And again in the forties and fifties of the nineteenth century, when the dreams of a slave-empire in the West Indies captivated the fancies of southern slave-owners, Santo Domingo became an object of keen interest to its northern neighbor.

It is my purpose to chronicle the interrelations between the histories of the United States and Santo Domingo in the period from 1789 to 1866. An introductory chapter on trade relations existing between the two countries during the eighteenth century furnishes the economic background for the political connections which had their beginning as the French Revolution spread through the French

colonial possessions. The period dealt with divides into two main parts. The first, from 1789 to 1803, is the period in which the French still retained their hold upon the island, the richest of all their colonies. The second, from 1803 to 1866, covers the first half of the history of Haitian independence and ends with the granting of the long-sought and grudgingly-given recognition of that independence by the United States.

CHAPTER I

TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SANTO DOMINGO DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It was on his first voyage of discovery that Columbus reached the island to which he gave the name Hispaniola and in which he established the first city founded by Europeans in the western hemisphere, Santo Domingo City, which still breathes a quaint Old World atmosphere. The history of Spain in Santo Domingo is one repeated in every land into which the Spaniards penetrated; a greedy search for gold, the extermination of the natives by a policy of reckless exploitation, and restrictive trade regulations which prevented the development of any sound colonial economy. The result was a gradual draining off of the conquistadores to Mexico and Peru where more alluring prizes were being offered to those adventurous spirits. But, though the colony decayed, Spain retained her hold upon the eastern half of the island until well into the nineteenth century.¹

The western half she early abandoned, for, while it was to prove the richest treasure-mine of all the West Indian islands, it was poor in the precious metals which alone Spain seemed able to garner. In 1697, at the Peace of Ryswick, she made the formal surrender of her rights to France. It is the French half of the island which is of interest during the colonial period, for interest centers in

¹ The standard authority for the early history of Santo Domingo is Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole ou de Saint-Domingue*.

the trade connections of the colony with the outside world and of such connections Spanish Santo Domingo had none.

Early in the seventeenth century, roving bands of buccaneers and freebooters found a footing on the little island of Tortuga and from there made their way over to the deserted western half of the island of Santo Domingo. Outcasts of all nations, they kept a precarious hold upon the island, often driven away by the Spaniards but as often returning, and from it they sallied forth on their marauding expeditions to spread terror over the Spanish Main.

It was long a question of doubt whether England or France would assert supremacy over this lawless colony but by 1660 the question was settled² and in 1664 France granted the island to the Company of the West Indies just established.³

To Colbert was entrusted the task of building up the French colonial empire and for assistance he resorted to great chartered companies, one of his principal objects being "to establish trade with the islands and mainland of America, which foreigners had usurped for sixty years, in order to preserve for our people the advantages which their courage and their industry had given them the right to enjoy from the discovery of a great expanse of land in this part of the world."⁴ It proved especially difficult, however, to establish a company monopoly of trade among the colonists of Santo Domingo, who were unused to any restraint, or to break up their trade with the Dutch "who had never let them lack for anything at a period when the presence of French at Tortuga and St. Domingo was unknown in France."⁵ Repeated regulations against trade with foreigners had the effect of increasing the trade carried on under the French flag and at the same time of making more hazardous all other trade with the island. But,

² Vaissière, *Saint-Domingue: La Société et la vie Créoles sous l'Ancien Régime*, 6-10.

³ Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy*, 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

though for over a hundred years French colonial policy forbade any commercial connections between its possessions and the outside world, foreign trade with Santo Domingo continued almost without interruption and increased steadily in amount.

Just when trade with the North American colonies began is uncertain. In 1675 a Boston ketch was admitted into Martinique with provisions,⁶ and in 1681 the refiners of Guadeloupe and Martinique petitioned for permission to trade 'with the English colonies, especially those in the neighborhood of Boston.'⁷ Direct intercourse between New England and Santo Domingo probably began somewhat later, for the basis of the trade was sugar and molasses and in 1682 Santo Domingo was just beginning to establish sugar plantations and a decade later it was still clinging to tobacco as its monopoly product.⁸ It was not until the Treaty of Utrecht had been signed that the trade assumed proportions of any importance, but the year following the treaty the *Boston News Letter* begins its record of vessels from Santo Domingo.

The principal objects of exchange were: from the British colonies, salt fish which was too poor to find a market in Spain and Portugal but which fed the slaves of the great sugar plantations; salt meat and vegetables for the planter's table; spermaceti candles and lamp oil to illuminate his home; staves and hoops for the thousands of hogsheds which Santo Domingo yearly filled with sugar and molasses; lumber for building and even house-frames ready to be set up by unskilled negro labor; and live stock and horses for the plantations. The French island in return furnished an ever-abundant supply of molasses, which, converted into rum, formed an important article of exchange in the African slave-trade, among the Indians in return for furs, and among the fishermen on the Newfoundland Banks. In addition Santo Domingo paid its adverse balance in trade in specie which served as a circulating medium on the

⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 257, 258.

American continent and helped to pay the bills which the American colonists owed in ever-increasing amounts to European merchants.⁹

In theory the French government was opposed to this trade between the French West Indies and the British colonies and passed numerous laws against it, threatening with the galleys any colonist who dared to trade with a foreigner.¹⁰ But practically such a prohibition proved impossible, for foreign trade was an absolute necessity to Santo Domingo.

The island needed the North American colonies as a market for its molasses and rum. Sugar was admitted into France but its by-products were forbidden importation from the fear that they might come into competition with French wines and brandies. A vent had to be found for them elsewhere if the sugar plantations were to prosper. But the English colonies were even more important as a source of food supplies than as a market. Highly specialized as Santo Domingo was in the production of sugar and coffee, she was utterly unable to feed herself and had to depend on external sources for almost her entire supply of provisions. France, in her attempt to retain a monopoly over this branch of trade, showed herself incapable and even unwilling to meet the demand. In times of peace her merchant marine proved inadequate and during war when her merchant vessels were swept from the seas, her colonies were dependent on foreigners, Dutch, American, and even English, for subsistence.

To make the French empire entirely self-sufficing would have required not only the mother-country and the West Indian colonies, but trading-posts on the coasts of Africa, guaranteeing a sufficient supply of slaves, and well-de-

⁹ Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l'État Présent de la Colonie française de Saint-Domingue*, 295. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, I, 606. *An Essay on the Trade of the Northern Colonies of Great Britain in North America*. 6. Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, iii, 173, 568.

¹⁰ Lévassieur *Histoire du Commerce de la France*, i, 488, 489.

veloped colonies in the temperate zone.¹¹ That Canada or Louisiana might take the place held in Santo Domingan economy by the British colonies was a cherished dream of French statesmen from Colbert to Napoleon;¹² but neither country had reached a sufficiently high economic development, before they were lost to France, to make them important factors in Santo Domingan trade.¹³

Despite the regulations against it, foreign trade continued. In times of need governors were permitted to relax the regulations,¹⁴ officials could be bribed and smuggling was easy in the bays and creeks along the coasts of Santo Domingo. Neither in quantity, quality nor price of food stuffs could France compete with the North American colonies in her own possessions, and, pass what regulations she might, it was impossible for her to keep American provisions out of the French islands; all she could do was to place obstacles in the way of the trade which would make it more difficult and less profitable.

The most vehement complaints against this trade in the early part of the eighteenth century came not from the French merchants, but from the British West India planters who hoped by monopolizing commerce with the continental colonies to buy their food stuffs at a lower price and to command a better market for their sugar and molasses. Complaints began as early as 1715.¹⁵ In 1717 the Board of Trade issued instructions to the governors of the North American colonies to forbid all trade with the French possessions as being illegal, though their contention as to the illegality of the traffic seems to have been without foundation.¹⁶ Despite the prohibition of the Board of Trade, exchange continued. For the year 1730 the Boston News-Letter reports eleven vessels from Cap Français, the

¹¹ Mims, *op. cit.*, 334.

¹² Mims, *op. cit.*, 315-318. *Lettres Critique et Politique sur les Colonies et le Commerce des Villes Maritimes de France*, 94.

¹³ Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *op. cit.*, 294.

¹⁴ Levasseur, *op. cit.* I, 489. Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *op. cit.*, 282.

¹⁵ Macpherson, *op. cit.*, iii, 171.

¹⁶ Beer, *British Colonial Policy 1754-1765*, 75. *The Boston News-Letter*, February 3-10, 1718.

chief city of French Santo Domingo,¹⁷ out of a total of 533 entering Boston Harbor.

Renewed attacks from the British West Indies however, were made upon this trade. In 1731 a bill to prevent the importation of sugar, rum and molasses into the British colonies from foreign possessions passed the House of Commons but was dropped in the House of Lords.¹⁸ Continued agitation during the next two years resulted in the passage of the Molasses Act in 1733, which imposed a duty of ninepence a gallon on rum, sixpence on molasses and five shillings a hundredweight on sugar. The duties imposed were so high that enforcement of the act would have put an end to the trade which the northern colonies considered the basis of their prosperity.¹⁹ Fortunately for them, it became a dead letter almost as soon as it was placed upon the statute-book and no serious attempt to enforce it was made for twenty-five years.²⁰

That the Molasses Act was at last made effective was due to the fact that the British colonies were unwilling to suspend trade with the French islands even during the wars which France and England waged with each other in this century. They lacked a realizing sense of the unity of their interests with those of Great Britain, while the high prices obtaining in the French islands stimulated their love of gain. The condition of Santo Domingo in war-time was pitiable. The French merchant-marine, inadequate for the task of provisioning the island in times of peace, disappeared from the seas at the opening of war, leaving the colony dependent on foreign trade for the necessities of life. Prices immediately jumped to fifteen or twenty times their original amount, while the slaves, the first to suffer, died by the thousands.²¹ No wonder that the re-

¹⁷ *The Boston News-Letter*, February 25-March 4, 1731.

¹⁸ Macpherson, *op. cit.*, iii, 171.

¹⁹ M. B., *A Letter to the West India Merchants*. Macpherson, *op. cit.*, 171 ss.

²⁰ Ashley, *Surveys Historic and Economic: England and America*, 330. thinks that the act was not intended to be put into force.

²¹ *Lettres Critique et Politique sur les Colonies et le Commerce des Villes Maritimes de France*, 101.

wards for trade under such conditions were so great as to overbalance the feeble spirit of patriotism felt by the British colonies for the mother country.

This American trade exercised a decisive influence on the events of the wars fought in America; for England, with her control of the seas, counted on being able to starve the French colonies into submission and to prevent action on the part of the French army and navy by making it impossible for them to secure provisions and equipment. But the advantages obtained from English sea-power were neutralized by the action of the English colonists who kept the French colonies from starvation and furnished provisions and munitions of war to the French army and navy to such an amount that the English could at times supply themselves only with difficulty and at high prices.

During the War of the Austrian Succession such was the extent of the trade between the North American colonies and the French West Indies that Admiral Knowles declared it "had resulted in the failure of English naval operations in the Caribbean Sea".²² But it was in the French War that the trade reached its height. Through cartel ships and flags of truce or by trade through Dutch Curaçao and St. Eustatia,²³ an active commerce was carried on with the French islands. Moreover in 1759 and 1760 a more direct trade was established through Monte Cristi, in ordinary times a sleepy little village in Spanish Santo Domingo, just over the border from Cap Français, but made into a free port and transformed by the war into a busy commercial harbor where at times a hundred vessels lay at anchor, bringing provisions for the French forces to be exchanged for French sugar and molasses.²⁴ Complaints against this trade were numerous and at length the English government was aroused to take decisive steps to end it. The chief means adopted were the enforcement of

²² Beer, *op. cit.*, 73.

²³ *Remarks on several acts of Parliament relating more especially to the Colonies abroad, etc.*, 35.

²⁴ *The Commerce of Rhode Island 1726-1800*, i, 79, 80, 82, 88, gives a few examples of such voyages to Monte Cristi.

the Molasses Act for which Writs of Assistance were called into use, and the employment of British men of war as revenue cutters to prevent smuggling.

This trade with Monte Cristi brought home to the English government the laxness in administration of the customs laws. To prevent further violations of these laws Lord Grenville introduced his famous Sugar Act of 1764, which lowered the duty on molasses from sixpence to threepence a gallon but made stringent provisions for its collection. It was this attempt to interfere with the profits of the West Indian trade and the friction arising between the customs officials charged with the prevention of smuggling, and the American colonists, which led so directly to the American Revolution.²⁵

In the French regulations no change was made until after the Treaty of Paris, 1763. The law of 1727 forbidding all trade with foreigners remained on the statute-book. Choiseul promised the merchants of the French ports interested in the colonial trade that he would provide for its enforcement but economic conditions were too strong for him and in 1767 he was compelled to adopt the free port system.²⁶ Two free ports were established in the French West Indies, one in Saint-Lucie and the other in Santo Domingo at Môle Saint-Nicolas, where foreigners might bring rice, lumber, vegetables and live-stock, the importation of salted meats and fish being forbidden; and might take in exchange molasses and rum.²⁷ The change was far from satisfying either the Yankee trader or the Santo Domingan planter; for the list of imports was small and fish, which was most essential, was excluded. In addition the normal result of the free port system followed in that the merchants at Môle Saint-Nicholas formed a monopoly which absorbed most of the profits of the Ameri-

²⁵ The most careful investigator of the trade between the North American colonies and the French West Indies during the wars of the eighteenth century is Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765*.

²⁶ Levasseur, *op. cit.*, i, 489.

²⁷ Mills, *The Early Years of the French Revolution in San Domingo*, 12.

can trader on the one hand and of the French planters outside of Môle on the other.²⁸

Changes were soon made in this new system. In August, 1769, flour and other food stuffs were added to the list of imports allowed entrance into Môle Saint-Nicolas;²⁹ while the outbreak of the American Revolution necessitated a complete reversal of the French policy. The first two years of the war, during which the English were quite successful in breaking up American trade with the West Indies,³⁰ caused a great deal of suffering in Santo Domingo. The failure of crops in the island, added to the interruption of the trade upon which Santo Domingo depended for its subsistence, increased prices many fold while in those two years thirty thousand slaves are said to have perished.³¹ By 1777 trade began to resume its old routes and in 1778 the French colonial ports were thrown open to the vessels of foreign nations.³²

The last years of the American War of Independence brought commercial prosperity but its close raised many anxious questions in regard to the commercial status of the United States. Could the advantages which had formerly been enjoyed within the British colonial system be retained after the restrictions of that system had been abolished? France and Spain, Holland and Denmark, had opened their ports to Americans during the war. Did this indicate a settled policy for the future or was the old colonial system to be re-established as soon as the war was over?

The English answer to these questions was decided. Despite the efforts of Pitt, England retained her old policy of confining English trade to English vessels and rigidly excluded from such trade all American vessels.³³ French

²⁸ *Lettres Critique et Politique sur les Colonies et le Commerce des Villes Maritimes de France*, 113-114.

²⁹ Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *op. cit.*, 286.

³⁰ Macpherson, *op. cit.*, iii, 595.

³¹ *Lettres Critique et Politique sur les Colonies et le Commerce des Villes Maritimes de France*, 120-121.

³² Channing, *History of the United States*, iii, 389, 409, n. *Lettres Critique et Politique sur les Colonies et le Commerce des Villes maritimes de France*, 125. Macpherson, *op. cit.*, iv, 55.

³³ Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America*, 189. Macpherson, *op. cit.*, iv, 26.

legislation was not quite so exclusive. In July, 1783, American merchants seem to have been given permission "to furnish our Colonies (of France) with every kind of their commodities, that *our nation cannot supply us with.*"³⁴ In March, 1784, the ordinance of 1767 was again put into force making Môle Saint-Nicolas the sole port of entry in Santo Domingo, at the desire of the merchants, particularly of Bordeaux, Nantes and La Rochelle in which the colonial trade centered, who complained that "thrown out of their trade" by foreigners during the American Revolution, they had "become bankrupts in great numbers," and reminded the government that "the national revenue deeply felt the loss of the best branch of the national trade."³⁵ The effect of this ordinance was to raise prices at once and to stimulate contraband trade which began "not at Le Cap, because that was impossible, but in all the little ports along the coast, from Port Margot to Môle Saint-Nicolas, despite the vigilance and activity of the officer in command of the fleet."³⁶

In August a new arrêt was passed which was looked upon by the French merchants as revolutionary and a complete overturning of the colonial system which had been in force ever since the days of Colbert. By it six free ports were established in place of the two already open, one each in Saint-Lucie, Martinique and Guadeloupe, and three in Santo Domingo, at Cap Français, Port au Prince and Les Cayes. Into these ports American vessels of at least sixty tons were admitted "loaded with timber of all kinds, dyewoods, coals, live stock, salt beef (but not salt pork), salt fish, rice, legumes, raw or tanned hides, peltry, rosin, pitch, and tar," and were permitted to take in return "only molasses and rum (taffia) and goods brought from France, on paying the local duties established, or to be

³⁴ Chalmers, *Opinions on Interesting Subjects of Public Law and Commercial Policy*, 81. Channing, *History of the United States*, iii, 409, n. states that he has been unable to find this ordinance.

³⁵ Macpherson, *op. cit.*, iv, 55.

³⁶ *Lettres Critique et Politique sur les Colonies et le Commerce des Villes Maritimes de France*, 131.

established in each colony, with a further duty of one per cent ad valorem on all imports and exports."³⁷

This ordinance aroused a storm of complaints among the French mercantile class, quick to detect any change detrimental to their interests, while petitions from the seaports through their chambers of commerce poured in upon the government.³⁸ The government, however, stood firm, contenting itself with modifications which gave a decided advantage to the French fisheries over the American.³⁹

In the United States, on the other hand, the measure was not looked upon as being particularly favorable to American trade. The ordinance "excluded some of our principal staples, especially flour," while as to return cargoes, "all cotton, coffee, sugar, and other productions (rum and molasses excepted) were prohibited; and we could, except occasionally by local relaxations of the general law, rightfully obtain none of them from the French West Indian islands."⁴⁰ In addition, the "conditions under which the commerce was carried on proved burdensome; 16 American vessels were seized by the French in 1785."⁴¹

During Jefferson's residence as American minister at Paris, he made repeated attempts to secure extensions in trade privileges but in vain. The "temper of that period" made it impossible to obtain further concessions.⁴² Certain advantages were, however, derived from the Anglo-French treaty of 1786, which "established complete and reciprocal freedom of navigation and commerce, even in times of war, freedom of sojourn and of travel in all the possessions of the two sovereigns."⁴³ This was followed in 1787 by the Franco-American convention which granted to the United States the advantages enjoyed by the most favored nation in the American colonies, to

³⁷ Macpherson, *op. cit.*, iv, 55-56.

³⁸ Déschamps, *Histoire de la Question Coloniale en France*, 312.

³⁹ Lodge, *Works of Hamilton*, iv, 213.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, vi, 4.

⁴¹ Channing, *op. cit.*, iii, 412, n. 2.

⁴² Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, vi, 80.

⁴³ Levasseur, *op. cit.*, i, 540.

the joy of the French colonists and the grief of the French merchants.⁴⁴

But, as during the earlier part of the century, contreband trade came to supplement that regularly authorized and the privileges granted served only as a stimulus to the growth of illegal traffic.⁴⁵

The estimate of the value to the United States of the trade with the French West Indies, of which Santo Domingo was by far the most important, may be found scattered through the writings of the Critical Period. John Adams, whose residence in New England gave him an especially strong interest in commerce, recurs to this subject repeatedly in his correspondence of June and July, 1783, written from Paris. On July 3, he wrote to Livingston, then Secretary of State:

The commerce of the West India Islands falls necessarily into the natural system of the commerce of the United States. We are necessary to them, and they are to us; and there will be commerce between us. If the governments forbid it, it will be carried on clandestinely.⁴⁶

A week and a half before he had written:

The nations of Europe, who have islands in the West Indies, have at this moment a delicate part to take. Upon their present decision great things will depend. The commerce of the West India Islands is a part of the American system of commerce. They can neither do without us, nor we without them. . . . Obstinate attempts to prevent the islands and the continent, by force or policy, from deriving from each other those blessings which nature has enabled them to afford, will only put both to thinking of means of coming together. And an injudicious regulation at this time may lay a foundation for intimate combinations between the islands and the continent, which otherwise would not be wished for, or thought of by either.⁴⁷

La Fayette, in a letter to Vergennes of about the same time, also expressed a fear of the strengthening of political ties between the two countries by the refusal of freedom of trade between them. He wrote:

⁴⁴ Zimmermann, *Die Kolonialpolitik Frankreichs von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* 252.

⁴⁵ Boissonade, *Saint-Domingue à la Veille de la Révolution*, 24.

⁴⁶ *The Life and Works of John Adams*, viii, 79.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, viii, 74-75.

The United States possessing superabundant productions, and the islands having wants in common with them, which bring them together; it is to be feared that the refusal of an honest freedom will lead them to a general license. If every thing is forbidden to them, the Americans, as well as the inhabitants of the colonies, will break all laws, but the assurance of a lawful profit, will drive away smuggling, which brings vexations, animosities, wastes the King's revenue, destroys all arrangements in favor of our commerce, and loosens the political ties.⁴⁸

To the same effect Turgot, who doubted the value of colonial possessions to France, expressed his conviction that the Americans would be compelled to fight "not to conquer the colonies, if they are at all wise, but to aid them to free themselves, to form an alliance with them, or to incorporate them in their union."⁴⁹

Jefferson, too, whose interest in commerce was so great that "his diplomatic correspondence with Vergennes and Montmorin fairly reeks with the flavors of whale oils, salt-fish, and tobacco,"⁵⁰ wrote that "access to the West Indies is indispensably necessary to us."⁵¹ And again; "The effecting *treaties* with the *powers* holding *positions* in the *West Indies*, I consider as the *important* part of our *business*. It is not of great consequence whether the *others* *treat* or not."⁵² His great anxiety was how to obtain such privileges from France since we had already given her all we had to offer in return for her aid during our war of Independence. It was in regard to this phase of the question that he wrote:

Holland has purchased the protection of France. The price she pays is *aid in time of war*. It is interesting to us to purchase a free commerce with the French islands. But whether it is best to pay for it, by *aids in war*, or by *privileges in commerce*, or *not to purchase it at all*, is the question.⁵³

⁴⁸ *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States of America from the Treaty of Paris to the adoption of the Present Constitution*, i, 401.

⁴⁹ Schöne, *La Politique de la France au XVIII^e Siècle à l'Égard des Colonies*, 407.

⁵⁰ Morse, *Thomas Jefferson*, 71.

⁵¹ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, iv, 58.

⁵² *Ibid.*, iv, 31.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, iv, 130.

The Comte de Moustier, in his correspondence as French minister to the United States, also bears witness to the keen interest among Americans in questions of trade which was to be found not only among "the merchants, but the planters who have need of a market for their produce. The Antilles appear to them to offer the most convenient one." Later he wrote of American expectations:

The greater number dream of demanding more, rather than of being grateful for what has been granted. In general they do not cease to keep in view a greater liberty of commerce with the Antilles, where they wish that American flour may be admitted and from which they wish to export sugar and coffee directly. . . . To hear them, one would believe at times that all that they have obtained was due them and that every refusal to grant further concessions is an injustice.⁵⁴

The value of the trade carried on between the United States and Santo Domingo during the Critical Period is difficult to estimate. Boissonade places the ostensible traffic of the island with foreign nations in 1788 at seven million francs imports and three million seven hundred thousand francs exports, but adds that the contraband trade had been given "new encouragement."⁵⁵ Dubuisson gives a tentative estimate of the value of the contraband trade as from fifteen to twenty million francs.⁵⁶

The importance of the trade for the later relations of the two countries rested, however, not in its amount, but in the very fact of its existence. Economic interdependence augured at least a certain degree of political interdependence, while exchange of articles of commerce foreshadowed the exchange of political ideals and the spread through the French colony of the revolutionary sentiments which had already freed the United States.

⁵⁴ *American Historical Review*, viii, 724, 725.

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, 24.

⁵⁶ *Lettres Critique et Politique sur Les Colonies et le Commerce des Villes Maritimes de France*, 113.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN SANTO DOMINGO

The most important factor in molding the history of Santo Domingo was the French Revolution, which, because of the very completeness with which it overturned established customs and ways of thought, could not by any chance be confined within the boundaries of France. The beginning of the movement found an echo throughout the French colonies, while its progress was closely correlated in the mother country and in the French over-seas possessions. In Santo Domingo the reaction to revolutionary sentiments was particularly violent, partly because of the wealth and importance of the colony and partly because of the spirit of freedom and liberty which had been indelibly stamped upon the colony in its early days of buccaneering and freebooting.

The history of the revolutionary movement in Santo Domingo may, for convenience, be divided into three main divisions: the first, from 1789 to 1793, the period which saw the downfall of the white supremacy in the island; the second, from 1793 to 1800, the period of the black supremacy under Toussaint Louverture; and the third, from 1800 to 1803, which witnessed the attempt of Napoleon to restore the power of France over the colony and his failure.⁵⁷ It is unnecessary here to go into the details of the struggle. The movement was even more complex in Santo Domingo than in France for not only were there all the cross-currents which divided class from class among the whites in the mother country, but there were further complications arising from creole jealousies and especially from the distinctness with which the color line was drawn in the island.

Of the causes which precipitated the French Revolution in Santo Domingo, the only one of interest to us is the desire for economic freedom. Wide as were the departures already made from Colbert's ideal of a strict monopoly of colonial trade for the benefit of the French merchants the

⁵⁷ Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo*, ix.

colonists were far from satisfied. Their prosperity paled before their visions of profits under a system of free trade, and their early efforts were directed in part toward the attempted realization of these visions. Jefferson recognized the possibilities for the United States in such a state of affairs and wrote to William Short, whom he had left as American chargé d'affaires at Paris, in August, 1790, as follows:

The French colonies will doubtless claim in their new constitution, a right to receive the necessities of life from whomever will deliver them cheapest; to wit, grain, flour, live stock, salted fish, and other salted provisions. It would be well that you should confer with their deputies, guardedly, and urge them to this demand, if they need urging.⁵⁸

The Santo Domingan planters had, by that time, already made an attempt to extend their trade privileges by making use of their governor, Du Chilleau, sent over in December 1788, a weak man and very much under their influence.⁵⁹ The ordinance of 1784 seems to have given a certain latitude to the colonial governor in opening the ports of the colonies for the admission of food stuffs, provided that "any regulation to this effect made by him must at once be forwarded to the Minister of Marine for his approval."⁶⁰

The excuse for a change at this time in trade regulations was the shortage of crops in France during the winter of 1788-1789, which threatened a serious famine there, and which cut down to an alarming extent the exportation of food to the colony. To quote from a report by the deputies of Santo Domingo to a committee of the National Assembly, during the first three months, of 1789, Port au Prince required for subsistence 27,000 barrels of flour. French importation during the period amounted to 5526 barrels or a quantity sufficient for only twenty-nine out of the ninety days.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, v, 236.

⁵⁹ Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 76.

⁶⁰ Mills, *op. cit.*, 13.

⁶¹ *Précis Remis par les Députés de Saint-Domingue aux six Commissaires du Comité d'Agriculture et de Commerce, chargés de rendre compte à l'Assemblée Nationale de l'affaire relative à l'approvisionnement de cette Isle*, 1, n.

Under such circumstances Du Chilleau, by a decree of March 31, 1789, added flour to the list of imports at the three ports of entry, importation to be permitted until June 30.⁶² So far he was within his rights, but two later decrees in May exceeded the authority given to the governor. The first, of May 9, erected two additional free ports in the southern province and greatly extended the list of imports;⁶³ the second practically "opened temporarily all the ports of the island to the importation of bread and foreign grain, and allowed free exportation of colonial products."⁶⁴

These ordinances aroused a tempest in France. The instructions to the deputy from La Rochelle expressed the sentiments of the other port towns. "Request prompt orders for putting an end to the horrible effects of the Ordinance; it tends to strike at the prosperity of the merchants, and it will insensibly cause French navigation to decline. Insist above all on the reestablishment of the prohibitive régime in the colonies."⁶⁵ The French government took prompt action in regard to this infringement of its colonial policy. The ordinance was repealed on July 23, while Du Chilleau was recalled and a more obedient governor was sent in his place.⁶⁶ The quickness with which American trade responded to any favorable turn in commercial regulations governing the island was shown by the rapid increase of American shipping in Santo Domingan ports and the glutting of the Santo Domingan market with American produce immediately upon receipt of the news of the extensions granted by Du Chilleau.⁶⁷

A similar attempt was made in the summer of 1790 to secure freedom of trade, this time by the General Assembly. Two laws passed in July abolished the free port system as tending to monopoly and established almost complete free trade. But factions had already developed among the

⁶² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶³ *The Pennsylvania Packet*, July 7, 1789.

⁶⁴ Mills, *op. cit.*, 40.

⁶⁵ Schöne, *op. cit.*, 256.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁶⁷ *The Pennsylvania Packet*, January 22, 1790.

colonists and this action by the General Assembly representing the smaller planters and the poor whites of the West and South of French Santo Domingo, met with the opposition of the wealthy merchants and the great planters of Cap Français in the North, who already began to see that their salvation lay in clinging to the old régime, despite the restraints it imposed upon them. The attempt, therefore, proved a failure with practically no effect upon trade conditions.⁶⁸

That the American government was as ready as the French colonists to take advantage of the disturbed conditions in the island to secure an increase in trade privileges is shown by the sending of Mr. Bourne in June, 1790, as American consul to Cap Français to look after American interests there.⁶⁹ The French government considered this a "forced interpretation" of the consular convention of 1788, which had defined the rights and privileges of the consuls of each nation in the territories of the other, and refused to recognize Mr. Bourne.⁷⁰ But the Provincial Assembly of the North, exceeding the authority of a colonial legislature, granted him an *exequatur* and he thereupon assumed both the title and function of an American consul.

Attempts were also made to secure a new commercial treaty which should grant to the Americans the freedom of trade in the French West Indies which they so much desired.⁷¹ The bases proposed for such a treaty by the United States included among other provisions, the opening of all the ports in the possessions of either nation to the other and permission to American vessels to export to the French colonies American produce, including fish, and to import from the French colonies colonial produce sufficient for American consumption.⁷² Ternant, French minister to the United States from August, 1791, to May, 1793, failed to make a treaty on this basis. His successor,

⁶⁸ Mills, *op. cit.*, 69-70.

⁶⁹ Lipscomb, *Writings of Jefferson*, viii, 186.

⁷⁰ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 64.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 57-59.

⁷² *Ibid.*, ii, 111.

Genet, was given instructions to accept the American proposals for a commercial treaty, provided that he found himself unable to form a still closer alliance which should exchange political as well as commercial advantages.⁷³ There was one provision on which he was to insist, that a guarantee by the United States of French possession of the French West India islands should be a *sine qua non* of freedom of trade with the islands.⁷⁴ Even a commercial treaty proved impossible to execute and Genet's successors were no more successful than himself.

The United States, however, by the outbreak of the war between France and England in 1793, reaped temporarily all the advantages of the most favorable treaty. In February of that year France was compelled in order to keep her colonies from starvation, to throw open their ports to American trade on American terms.⁷⁵ The effect was to place practically all of the Santo Domingan trade in American hands, including even the trade between the island and Europe.⁷⁶

The first step toward a closer union between Santo Domingo and the United States was taken by the French colonists in the summer of 1791. The revolutionary movement which had its beginning in the latent unrest of the Santo Domingan creoles, became active in 1790. The history of that year is the record of a confused struggle of faction against faction among the whites, who united only long enough to crush the mulatto uprisings which threatened white supremacy; but in 1791 one great fact and one great event loom up big with the portent of coming evil. For in that year the revolutionary spirit penetrated to the masses of savage ill-treated slaves and acted as a leaven in turning them against their masters who had so long exploited their labor. Previous attempts by the negro slaves to regain their freedom had been repressed but divisions

⁷³ *Ibid.*, ii, 204.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 209.

⁷⁵ *Actes et Mémoires concernant les Négociations, qui ont eu lieu entre la France et les États-Unis de l'Amérique, depuis 1793, jusqu'à la Conclusion de la Convention du 30 Septembre, 1800*, i, 15-16.

⁷⁶ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 566.

among the whites had so weakened the government that the success of the slaves was but a question of time. On the night of the twenty-second of August the revolt broke out in the great North Plain surrounding Cap Français, which lighted that fertile plain with the light of burning plantations and left it a scarred wilderness.⁷⁷

The danger to Cap Français, the metropolis of Santo Domingo, was great. Even with the refugees from the Plain, the city could not have had more than ten thousand whites, part of whom were foreigners, while the city rabble, greedy for plunder, could not be depended upon. But there were in addition in the city not less than fourteen hundred mulattoes and from ten to twelve thousand negro slaves ready at any moment to throw off their allegiance to their masters and join the revolt.⁷⁸ The case seemed desperate. France was far away and a Royalist governor might well have doubted the willingness of the National Assembly to grant him aid. It seemed wiser to the Vicomte de Blanchelande, the governor, and to the General Assembly of Santo Domingo to make their appeal for help to the English islands and to the United States. Even Martinique was not informed of the danger confronting her sister colony.⁷⁹

The day following the negro insurrection, letters were written to the Congress and the President of the United States recalling the ancient friendship existing between the two countries, describing the horrors of the insurrection, and asking for men, munitions of war and food.⁸⁰ These letters were entrusted to M. Roustan, a member of the General Assembly, who sailed immediately for the United States, reaching Philadelphia about the middle of September.⁸¹ He was followed a month later by two more deputies, MM. de Beauvois and Payan, who continued

⁷⁷ The best account in English of the events of this period is to be found in Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo*.

⁷⁸ Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 132.

⁷⁹ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 81.

⁸⁰ Tarbé, *Pièces Justificatives du rapport sur les troubles de Saint-Domingue*, contains, Nos. XII and XIII., the text of these letters.

⁸¹ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 45. *The General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, Sept. 21, 1791.

to represent the General Assembly until the summer of 1792.⁸² A special deputy was sent to the state of South Carolina, who eventually succeeded in obtaining £3000 from the state legislature but was unable to enlist a company of men for Santo Domingan service as he desired.⁸³

So contagious did the habit of sending delegates become, that even the republican South, presumably in close harmony with the French National Assembly, in 1792 appointed "commissioners near the United States, giving them full power to treat for supplies and a considerable loan, as surety for which they were charged to offer drafts on the national treasury of France, and in case this kind of payment should not be acceptable, they were authorized to propose the hypothecation of the whole territory of the province of the South."⁸⁴

There was a prompt response in the United States to M. Roustan's appeal for help. Both the president and the secretary of state were away when he reached Philadelphia, but the Pennsylvania legislature immediately took the matter under advisement and a motion was carried on September 21: "that taking into consideration the distressed and wretched situation of the inhabitants of Cap Français, then closely besieged by an enraged and brutal multitude of negroes, the House of Representatives as men enjoying the blessings of peace and as citizens of the world being bound to relieve their fellow creatures in an hour of such terror and misery, which will not admit of any delay" should make arrangements to send two vessels with provisions to Cap Français.⁸⁵ This action was rendered unnecessary by the energetic steps taken by the general government but it shows the spirit in which the news of the disaster at Cap Français was received by the American people.

Roustan's reception by the French minister, Ternant,

⁸² *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 72, 147.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, ii, 80, 86.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 101.

⁸⁵ *Report American Historical Association*, 1897, 491, in a letter from Phineas Bond to Lord Granville, October 2, 1791.

was much less cordial. Ternant felt that an appeal for help from a colony should have been made to the French minister and not to the American government. A direct appeal savored of independence and for that reason he was most insistent upon his own prerogatives. He objected to the delivery of the letters written to the President and Congress but was unable to prevent it.⁸⁶ He objected to certain expressions used in those letters, such as "relations which have long existed between these States and Santo Domingo," "fraternal attachment," "the credentials with which M. Roustan has been supplied;" and he objected to Roustan's assumption of the title of "deputy of the colony of Santo Domingo near the United States."⁸⁷ His determined opposition to any independent action on the part of the Santo Domingan representatives was based on the feeling that in view of "the proximity of the United States, the spirit of enterprise which reigns here and the rôle which these States have been called upon to play, it would be dangerous to allow the introduction of the custom of direct negotiations with the richest and most important of our colonies."⁸⁸

Fortunately for Ternant, he had the support of Jefferson, then secretary of state, who was quite as anxious as the French minister to avoid any cause of trouble between the United States and France and who frowned on any movement looking toward independence in Santo Domingo. As early as July, 1791, he had drafted a letter to William Short, American chargé d'affaires at Paris, saying: "*whatever jealousies are expressed as to any supposed views of ours on the dominion of the West Indies, you cannot go farther than the truth in asserting we have none. If there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American, it is that we should have nothing to do with conquest.*"⁸⁹ Other members of the government held the same opinion, that, if Santo Domingo obtained its inde-

⁸⁶ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 77.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 46, 50.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, 47.

⁸⁹ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, v, 363-364.

pendence, it would be too weak to maintain it and must of necessity fall under the control or at least under the influence of England. Its commerce would then be absorbed by that country. As greater commercial advantages were to be expected from the colony under French control than under English, and as trade was the most important factor to be considered in dealing with Santo Domingo, independence with a probability of English absorption could not be encouraged by American statesmen.⁹⁰

Though the newspapers reported the Santo Domingan deputies anxious for independence, Jefferson, who conversed freely with them, found them "as far from these views as any persons on earth." He told them in the course of a conversation with them, that, while the United States wished to do everything for a neighbor with whom it had so many "common points of union" in matters of commerce, nothing could be done that would be disagreeable to France and that concert with M. de Ternant was essential in any application to the American government. He also expressed to them his fear that the island might fall under the control of some other power than that of France.⁹¹ Whether the Santo Domingans had expected to deal directly with the American government or not, Jefferson's attitude, supported as it was by the other members of the cabinet and influential members of Congress effectually put an end to any hope of assistance from the United States in rebellion against France.

Having settled the question of independent action by the Santo Domingan deputies, the next step was to satisfy their demands. Ternant had less than thirty thousand dollars on hand when Roustau reached Philadelphia, a mere drop in the bucket.⁹² Recourse to France was impossible for revolutionary finances permitted no draft upon them by the American minister. A little later, in May 1795, Fauchet wrote that for more than two years the administra-

⁹⁰ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 74-75.

⁹¹ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, v, 315-316.

⁹² *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 47.

tion in Santo Domingo had not received a cent from the mother country.⁹³

The pressing urgency of the needs of the colony determined Ternant to make use of the only ample financial resource at hand, the debt which the United States still owed to France. Of the nearly fifty-three million livres which France had loaned, less than two million and a half had been repaid by the United States during the Critical Period and there were seven years of arrearages on which Ternant might count.⁹⁴

His first request was met with encouraging promptness. Washington forwarded the authorization for the payment from Mount Vernon immediately upon receipt of his letter.⁹⁵ Forty thousand dollars was placed to his credit in the Treasury and a thousand stands of arms and other military stores were furnished to him from West Point.⁹⁶ But before these supplies could reach Santo Domingo, MM. de Beauvois and Payan had arrived in Philadelphia with still heavier demands for "8000 fusils & bayonets, 2000 mousquators, 3000 pistols, 3000 sabres, 24,000 barrels of flour, 400,000 worth of Indian meal, rice, peas & hay, & a large quantity of plank, etc., to repair the buildings destroyed."⁹⁷

This was just a beginning of the demands made upon Ternant to relieve the necessities of the French colony. In March, 1792, the colonial administration requested \$400,000 for its use.⁹⁸ This was obtained by Ternant,⁹⁹ thanks to the willingness of Hamilton, who replied: "Our pecuniary resources are extremely limited; but *we can, to be sure, do something* if circumstances require; and in case of demands on your part you can count on my doing everything to comply with the views of your government."¹⁰⁰

⁹³ *Ibid.*, ii, 691.

⁹⁴ *American State Papers. Foreign Relations*, ii, 171.

⁹⁵ Sparks, *Writings of Washington*, x, 194.

⁹⁶ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, v, 395.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, v, 395.

⁹⁸ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 89-90.

⁹⁹ Hamilton, *Writings of Hamilton*, iv, 216.

¹⁰⁰ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 98.

In June, 1792, a decree of the National Assembly provided for the use of four million livres of the American debt to satisfy the needs of Santo Domingo. News of this decree was "sent to the government of St. Domingo, communicated by them to the Minister here, & by him" to the American government.¹⁰¹ No direct communication in regard to this decree was received from the French government either by the French minister or the American administration. The need of the colony was so great, however, that in January, 1793, despite the informality of the notification, both parties agreed to accept the decree and arrangements were made for paying over the sum appointed.¹⁰²

To add to Ternant's embarrassment and to increase the heavy drafts made upon his financial resources, provisions were continually being bought by the Santo Domingan government from American merchants in the island, without consultation with Ternant, and paid for in drafts on the French consul in Philadelphia. Payment on these drafts was several times suspended,¹⁰³ but the necessity of preserving French credit and of preventing outbursts of discontent from the American merchants compelled Ternant to strain every nerve to meet the demands of these creditors.¹⁰⁴

Ternant's motives in thus yielding to the colonial demands are fully explained in his correspondence with the home office. He was destitute of instructions, receiving, during his almost two years in office, no word of advice or instruction as to the course he should pursue in regard to Santo Domingo and no authorization for any of the steps he did take.¹⁰⁵ Compelled to act on his own initiative, he was placed in a most embarrassing position. He would be blamed if he did too much and he would be just as surely blamed if he did too little. A too lavish supply of muni-

¹⁰¹ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, vi, 151.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, vi, 161-162.

¹⁰³ *The General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, August 14, 1792; November 26, 1792; January 21, 1793.

¹⁰⁴ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 142.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 172.

tions and supplies might be used against the mother country and enable the colony to gain its independence. In October, 1791, he wrote that demands had been made for loans, munitions and food sufficient to put twenty thousand troops in arms.¹⁰⁶ He was also unwilling to encourage trade between the French colony and the continent from a fear that France could not in such a case resume her commercial supremacy at the conclusion of peace. On the other hand the needs of the Santo Domingan government were urgent and a loss of the island through his failure to support it would not be forgotten. And further, if he refused supplies, he could not be sure that the American government would not enter into direct relations with the colony, supplying what he refused.¹⁰⁷ Perplexed as to what was best to do, Ternant wrote again and again to France, imploring instructions, and in the meantime yielded, though as sparingly as possible, to the colonial demands.

As to the American attitude, Jefferson at first, fearful lest Santo Domingo should become disgusted with both France and the United States and should begin to coquette with England, acted as mediator between the colonists and the minister. He urged the deputies to be satisfied with moderate supplies which would keep them from real distress and he stirred up Ternant "to go beyond their absolute wants of the moment, so far as to keep them in good humor."¹⁰⁸

As time went on, the United States became less willing to furnish aid to Santo Domingo, partly as Jefferson wrote to La Fayette, "lest your government should feel any jealousy on our account,"¹⁰⁹ and partly from a feeling of uncertainty as to whether the French government would recognize as a satisfactory fulfillment of American obligations payments made with no formal authorization from France. Hamilton, in particular, who felt a profound

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 82.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 78.

¹⁰⁸ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, v, 396.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, vi, 79.

distrust for the revolutionary movement, wished to do as little as possible but realized that humanity and friendship demanded that the colony be preserved from destruction by famine.¹¹⁰

Despite the hesitation of the American government, the arrearages of the French debt were paid off by 1793. Genet, upon his entrance into office, at once asked for an anticipation in payment of the rest of the debt, amounting to \$2,300,000 but his request was refused.¹¹¹ His successor, Fauchet, was more successful in dealing with the American government and by 1795 the debt was discharged in its entirety.¹¹² Without this financial assistance from the United States it would have been almost, if not quite, impossible for the French administration to have sustained itself in Santo Domingo during the early days of the revolution.

Of military assistance, such as that rendered during the American Revolution by the volunteer troops brought over from Santo Domingo by the Comte d'Estaing to aid in the siege of Savannah,¹¹³ there was none. Polony's attempt to raise troops in South Carolina was met with refusal by the state government.¹¹⁴ But American residents in the island took an active part in the struggle. Americans were to be found in the scouting parties and expeditionary forces sent against the revolting negroes. Not only resident merchants but crews temporarily in port were called on to defend the French cities.¹¹⁵ In Cap Français a guard house was assigned to the American colony where they kept guard nightly, for almost two years after the first negro insurrection.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Lodge, *Works of Hamilton*, iv, 363-364.

¹¹¹ Hildreth, *History of the United States of America*, iv, 420. *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 873.

¹¹² Bayley, *History of the National Loans of the United States*, 393-395.

¹¹³ Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description de la Partie Française de Saint Domingue*, i, 321.

¹¹⁴ Garran-Coulon, *Rapport sur les Troubles de Saint-Domingue*, ii, 239.

¹¹⁵ *The General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, September 21, 1791; October 10, 1791; April 8, 1793.

¹¹⁶ Perkins, *Reminiscences of the Insurrection in St. Domingo*, 29, n.

But the aid given by the Americans in this way was probably more than neutralized by the assistance given to the blacks. The leader of the mulatto insurrection of October, 1790, Ogé, a young mulatto who received his inspiration from the society of the "Amis des Noirs" in Paris, convinced that he was to be the savior of his caste, laid his plans for revolt in Paris but was unable to obtain arms and supplies in France, from fear of having his plans detected. Following the advice of his French friends, he set sail for Santo Domingo by the round-about route of England and America. In the United States he seems to have experienced no difficulty in securing the necessary equipment while an American vessel landed him in Santo Domingo to suffer the fate of the unsuccessful rebel.¹¹⁷

When the negro insurrection broke out in the following year, it was at first supposed that the negroes were making use of the arms brought over by Ogé, but Bryan Edwards, looking at the matter from the slave-owner's point of view, states: "it grieves me to add that the rebels were afterwards abundantly supplied, by small vessels of North America; the masters of which felt no scruple to receive in payment sugar and rum, from the estates of which the owners had been murdered by the men with whom they trafficked."¹¹⁸ This contraband trade continued despite the efforts of the French to prevent it, and to it with its great increase under Toussaint Louverture, they attributed in large part the loss of their colony.

CHAPTER III

THE SANTO DOMINGAN REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES

One of the most difficult of the problems, which confronted the French ministers in the United States during the early days of the French Revolution, was that of dealing with the refugees who fled from the island to the greater safety of the American continent. Already habituated

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *An Historical Survey of the French Colony of San Domingo*, 67.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

to the voyage because of its shortness and the large number of vessels constantly plying between the United States and Santo Domingo, at the first outbreak of revolutionary disturbances, the French planters began the migration which was eventually to transfer to the United States a large proportion of the inhabitants of Santo Domingo, who did not perish on that ill-fated island.

Small at first, the immigration to the American continent increased rapidly. As early as October, 1791, Ternant, at Philadelphia, refers to the great number of refugees from Santo Domingo to be found in the United States.¹¹⁹ In May, 1792, he wrote that the immigration was becoming more considerable than ever. "There are actually more than two hundred families of Santo Domingo in Philadelphia alone; and I find by my correspondence with other cities of the continent, that our Creoles are there in as great numbers as here."¹²⁰ Men of wealth disposed "of the wrecks of their fortunes to buy lands and form establishments in the United States."¹²¹

In the spring of 1793 an epidemic of "ill health" swept over Cap Français, judging from the advertisements in the *Moniteur Général*, compelling its inhabitants to seek a safer climate in "New England."¹²² It was about this time, too, that the Civil Commissioners formed the habit of deporting to the United States such royalists as were a source of danger in the island but whom it was not advisable to send to the guillotine.¹²³ Jefferson, writing of the prospective arrival of four hundred of these "aristocrats and monocrats," expresses the wish that they might be distributed "among the Indians who would teach them lessons of liberty and equality."¹²⁴

But the numbers who had already arrived in the United

¹¹⁹ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 63.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, ii, 127.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 127.

¹²² *Moniteur Général de la partie française de Saint-Domingue*, the leading newspaper in Cap Français during the early nineties. The American Antiquarian Society has a file covering from February to June, 1793.

¹²³ Garran-Coulon *op. cit.*, iii, 359.

¹²⁴ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, vi, 268.

States were nothing compared to the flood of immigrants who sought the safety of American soil at the fall of Cap Français. The French Jacobins, in their wild rage at everything that savored of aristocracy, had sent over three Civil Commissioners to instil the principles of liberty, fraternity and equality among the slaves of their fairest colony. Of these three, the leader, Sonthonax, who represented French Republicanism gone mad, was destined to complete the destruction of that colony which had already fared so disastrously at the hands of the Revolution. To Sonthonax there was not only an aristocracy of blood but an aristocracy of skin, and his hatred of the creoles of Santo Domingo because of their white skins manifested itself in his despotic government.¹²⁵

In June, 1793, Cap Français made one last despairing effort to shake off this hated control of Sonthonax and his mulatto troops but when Sonthonax called to his aid the savage negro hordes who had devastated the great plain surrounding the city, Cap Français realized that her doom had been sealed and her citizens and soldiers crowded into the French squadron and the scores of American vessels which filled the harbor and set sail for the United States as a land of refuge.¹²⁶ In all, ten thousand refugees are said to have sailed from Cap Français on the morning of the twenty-second of June, 1793,¹²⁷ most of them turning directly to the American coast.

The voyage was a hard one at best; but in too many instances American captains were accused of plundering their unfortunate passengers or of turning them over to the tender mercies of pirates;¹²⁸ while the Anglo-French war rendered the vessels liable to visit and search by British privateers, who took from the refugees their slaves and the few possessions which they had managed to save.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ The best account of the events leading up to the fall of Cap Français is to be found in Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo*.

¹²⁶ A graphic description of the last few days in Cap Français and the condition of the refugees as the fleet left the harbor is given by Perkins, *Reminiscences of the Insurrection in St. Domingo*.

¹²⁷ Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 220.

¹²⁸ *General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, August 13, 1793.

¹²⁹ Edwards, *op. cit.*, 20-21.

It was early in July when the first of the fleet reached Norfolk. The condition of the French was most pitiable, many of them wounded and ill, without money or clothing, and without credit to purchase any of the things needful. They met with a very hospitable reception among the American people, though it must have taxed severely the resources of the young nation, by no means rich, to care for the hundreds of aliens who poured in upon them. States, cities and individuals contributed to their support. The legislatures of Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, Pennsylvania and even Massachusetts which was too far away to receive many of the immigrants, voted money for their relief.¹³⁰ Subscriptions were opened in towns and villages and hundreds of dollars were raised.¹³¹ Buildings of all sorts were converted into hospitals and inns.

Norfolk remained a favorite spot with the creoles because of its climate, its generous hospitality and its congenial atmosphere for slave-owners,¹³² but an effort was made to distribute the refugees as widely as possible so that the burden might not fall too heavily on any one section. Philadelphia was a popular refuge, a veritable "ark of Noah" for all French exiles. To the first call for help it responded with a subscription of \$11,000 and for four years it continued its gifts, to the French refugees.¹³³ An idea of the directions in which this money was expended may be gained from the proposal of the committee that it should spend \$4000 in sending two hundred refugees to France, \$3000 in sending one hundred and fifty back to Santo Domingo, \$800 in employing one hundred mechanics for one month, \$4400 in settling two hundred in the west, and \$900 to widows;¹³⁴ while the manner of distributing relief may be judged from an advertisement appearing in the *General Advertiser* of Philadelphia for April 2, 1794, to the "DISTRESSED INHABITANTS

¹³⁰ Dalmas, *Histoire de la Révolution de Saint-Domingue*, 215.

¹³¹ Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Voyage aux États-Unis de l'Amérique* 1793-1798, 55.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 55.

¹³³ Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 1609-1884, i, 470.

¹³⁴ McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States*, ii, 125, n.

of St. Domingo, now in Philadelphia," informing them that "the distribution of the money allotted to them, will be made THIS DAY at the South West corner of Walnut and Water streets, from nine o'clock until noon, and from three to five in the afternoon." In February 1795, \$2500 was distributed among the refugees, and \$1000 in January 1796 and again in January 1797.¹³⁵ New York was almost as popular as Philadelphia because of its political importance. There an effort was made to turn the immigration to the economic advantage of the state. Farms were given to the refugees who were provided with free transportation, ploughs, tools and five months' provisions.¹³⁶

But Baltimore seems to have had the heaviest burden to bear. Three thousand refugees landed in that city, of whom half needed assistance. In a letter to Genet, the French minister, written July 14, the Baltimore committee reported that \$13,000 had been raised in addition to the aid given by private hospitality but the expense was too heavy to be borne by the city alone. To this request for help Genet replied with a gift of \$2000 from his own purse, though he gave it grudgingly because no distinction was made, in the distribution of aid, between royalists and republicans.¹³⁷ The problem continued to be a pressing one. Six months later the city appealed to the state legislature which, after much debate, appropriated \$500 a week from December 1, 1793, to February 2, 1794.¹³⁸

Immediately thereafter an appeal was made to Congress. The petition presented by Mr. Samuel Smith of Baltimore, aroused a lively debate, the Virginian Republicans under the leadership of Madison opposing this act of national charity as unconstitutional.¹³⁹ Despite their opposition, however, the indiscriminate sympathy for all things French which characterized the American people at that time carried the day and \$15,000 was voted for the relief of the

¹³⁵ Scharf and Westcott, *op. cit.*, i, 470, n.

¹³⁶ McMaster, *op. cit.*, ii, 125.

¹³⁷ *General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, July 31, 1793.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, December 5, 1793.

¹³⁹ Benton, *Abridgments of the Debates in Congress*, ii, 462-463, 474-475.

Santo Domingans with the provision that, if possible, repayment of the sum should be secured from the French government.¹⁴⁰

To Genet the coming of these colonists was anything but welcome. Belonging as he did to the most radical wing of the republican party, he looked with aversion at this throng of refugees whom Adet described as being characterized "by one common sentiment, hatred of the Republic."¹⁴¹ They added much to his financial embarrassment; for, while he tried to restrict his aid to French patriots, public opinion demanded aid for all regardless of shades of belief, and he was forced to make certain concessions. In addition, the fleet had to be repaired and its two thousand sailors had to be fed, while France and Santo Domingo still looked to the United States for a large proportion of their food supplies.¹⁴² Complaints of these heavy demands upon their financial resources are constant in the correspondence of Genet and his successors.

More embarrassing even than the financial burden were the difficulties created by the refugees for the French minister in his dealings with the American government. His instructions had directed him "to cause the principle of the French revolution to germinate in Louisiana, in Kentucky and in the other provinces which border on the United States."¹⁴³ The Franco-American alliance which he was to make as close as possible, was "to free Spanish America, to open to the inhabitants of Kentucky the navigation of the Mississippi, to deliver our brothers of Louisiana from the tyrannical yoke of Spain, and perhaps to unite to the American Constellation the beautiful star

¹⁴⁰ A package among the miscellaneous papers in the archives of the State Department, entitled *Distressed Emigrants from San Domingo, 1794*, contains the estimates made for the Secretary of the Treasury of the number of indigent exiles in each state and the amount of money needed for their support. The estimate, made before investigation, placed the number of refugees throughout the country in need of assistance at two thousand.

¹⁴¹ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 871.

¹⁴² Hildreth, *op. cit.*, iv, 439.

¹⁴³ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 201.

of Canada.”¹⁴⁴ Genet entered upon his task with a zeal untempered by wisdom. Landing at Charleston, South Carolina, he had already, before reaching Philadelphia begun the enlistment of men in the southern states and had gotten into touch with General Clark in Kentucky.

Genet's first thought on learning of the arrival of the Santo Domingan squadron which had been stationed in the waters around the island and which had assisted in bringing the refugees from Cap Français to the United States, in American waters was that he might make use of it to further these ambitious plans upon which he had already entered. On the second of August he broached his great scheme to the minister of foreign affairs. He proposed sending the fleet first to Newfoundland to destroy the fisheries there and six hundred fishing vessels, to recapture St. Pierre and Miquelon, to capture the rich convoy just starting for Hudson Bay, to burn Halifax and to sound the Acadians as to their willingness to revolt to France. From there the fleet was to sail south, taking on board a corps of French and American volunteers in Virginia, capture the island of Providence, the nest of the English corsairs, and proceed to New Orleans to unite with Clark's expedition from Kentucky in the capture of that city.¹⁴⁵ In October he was still working on this plan, hoping to put it into execution,¹⁴⁶ but the fleet refused to take any part in the expedition and Genet's ambitious schemes accomplished little beyond discrediting himself.

The failure of the fleet to support Genet was due to its lack of sympathy with radical republicanism and to the plots and counterplots of Genet and the refugee leaders which added zest to the minister's life and not infrequently disturbed the public peace. Soon after the fleet reached Chesapeake Bay, Genet ordered it to New York where it would be under his immediate control in an atmosphere less congenial to counter-revolutionary movements. But

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 204.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 234.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 265.

though he spoke of the sailors as "good Citizens and disposed to serve their Country well, provided one speaks to them neither of Santo Domingo nor of the Commissioners nor of men of color nor of negroes,"¹⁴⁷ he found that the spirit of disaffection was hard to eradicate.

Immediately upon arriving in the United States a far-reaching plot was concocted by the leaders of the French refugees to return to Santo Domingo, drive out the Commissioners, and establish in the island a stronghold for the reactionary party.¹⁴⁸ Galbaud, a moderate republican who had been appointed governor-general of Santo Domingo because of his military ability but who had found the rule of the Commissioners unbearable and had led the exodus from Cap Français, was won over to the plot. Two thousand colonists scattered along the coast of the United States were enlisted in the enterprise, and it was hoped that the entire fleet would take part in such an expedition.

Genet learned of the plot late in August. He had caused the arrest, under New York state laws, of two of the leaders of the refugees, Tanguy-la-Boissière and Breton-Villandry. They were rescued from the hands of the constable by their friends but their papers giving the details of the conspiracy were turned over by Governor Clinton to the French minister.¹⁴⁹ Prompt action by Genet prevented the carrying out of the plot. The fleet was reduced to obedience, the crews being weeded of their most disaffected members, but Genet's own plans were checked quite as certainly as those of the counter-revolutionists.

The discovery of the plot led to the flight of Galbaud, who still retained the title of Governor-General of Santo Domingo, into Canada. This distinguished general was pursued out of the city by a writ calling for his arrest as a deserting sailor,¹⁵⁰ and he escaped arrest only because the inhabitants of East Clinton, a village, just out of New

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 239.

¹⁴⁸ *The New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, September 18, 1793.

¹⁴⁹ Garran-Coulon, iv, 368. *Débats entre les accusateurs et les accusés, dans l'affaire des colonies*, i, 12-13.

¹⁵⁰ *Débats entre les accusateurs et les accusés, dans l'affaire des colonies*, iv, 133.

York where an attempt was made to arrest him, were opposed to its execution.¹⁵¹ At the same time about a hundred sailors started, armed, to follow Galbaud who had given Philadelphia as his destination and Genet had to make use of troops and cannon before he could secure their arrest.¹⁵² A letter written by one of these sailors throws an interesting light on the relation of the French officials toward the Government of the United States, even though the authenticity of the letter may well be doubted.

We have forgotten to say, that, before we went to prison, General Washington, learning of the violence which had been committed by the French minister on American soil, where M. Genet had neither authority nor power, had sent a letter to the judge, to release us; but the French consul, who believed everything was permissible to a minister so audacious as M. Genet, caused the messenger to be arrested, and the letter to be taken from him and destroyed, and we were conducted to prison along with the bearer of the letter.¹⁵³

Genet seems to have exercised almost arbitrary power over the refugees in the state of New York, thanks to the support given him by Governor Clinton, who was quite as radical as the Frenchman himself in his republicanism and who stretched the laws of New York to the breaking-point to aid Genet against the counter-revolutionists.¹⁵⁴ But he found the Federal Government less complaisant and less ready to grant the preposterous demands made upon it which must have tried even Jefferson's French-loving soul. Of the eight letters which the French minister wrote to the secretary of state between the fourth of August and the fourth of October, 1793, demanding privileges not usually accorded to the representative of a foreign government, only one was answered in such a way as to give him any satisfaction.¹⁵⁵

Genet first demanded Federal writs for the apprehension of Galbaud and Tanguy, after his failure to arrest them in New York, because of the crimes they had already com-

¹⁵¹ Garran-Coulon, *op. cit.*, iv, 370.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, iv, 427.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, iv, 366.

¹⁵⁴ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 278.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 871.

mitted and were plotting to commit against France; and he considered it a grievance that Jefferson answered him that "the laws of this country take no notice of crimes committed out of their jurisdiction."¹⁵⁶ When he complained to the secretary of state that the refugees in great numbers were joining the English in their attempt to conquer Santo Domingo from the French and requested that steps be taken to prevent the departure of Frenchmen to Môle Saint-Nicolas and the other ports occupied by the English, he was informed that no military expedition should be allowed to set out from the United States but the departure of individuals could not be interfered with. His further blandly insolent suggestion that American ships of war should be instructed to prevent the departure of any vessel from the United States for Santo Domingo without a passport signed by himself, was dismissed with the statement that it "is so far beyond the power of the Executive, that it will be unnecessary to enumerate the objections to which it would be liable."¹⁵⁷

One further illustration might be given of the French attempt to dictate American policy, arising out of the presence of the French refugees in the United States. In October, 1793, Moissonier, French consul at Baltimore, wrote to General Lee, the governor of Maryland, that an English attack on Chesapeake Bay was imminent and that measures should be taken for the defence of the French convoy there. He continued:

The indifference of this state cannot exist as to our interests. This bay contains the riches of our commerce of St. Domingo, and the only hope of the French nation. We shall become infallibly the first victims of this carelessness, if I am not able to obtain from you, sir, that the forts which defend the entrance of the Chesapeake be put in condition.

In the meanwhile, and in pursuance of the orders of the minister, I am going to collect all the maritime forces which the republic has in this bay, to form a vanguard sufficiently formidable, and to derange, if it be possible, the projects of our common enemy.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ *American State Papers. Foreign Relations*, i, 171.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, i, 188.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 182.

That Genet's rupture with the American government was bound to come, is certain from the character of the man, but the presence of this turbulent element of Santo Domingo refugees undoubtedly added to his difficulties and furnished new grounds of trouble between him and the American government. Quarrels among the French often disturbed the public peace and necessitated the interference of the authorities. Hauterive, French consul at New York, was compelled to call in the police to protect him in his own rooms from certain of the refugees.¹⁵⁹ A similar attack was made on Genet,¹⁶⁰ and he wrote to Jefferson that the individual safety of the French consuls at Baltimore and Charleston was being threatened and complained that little activity was being shown in protecting them.¹⁶¹ The arrival of a delegation of whites, mulattoes and blacks bound from Santo Domingo to France was the occasion of a riot. Not until Consul Bournonville had called out the police, were they permitted to land, and even then they lost their packets and most of their effects.¹⁶²

Almost as disturbing of public order were the fêtes which were celebrated by French and Americans with great frequency and enthusiasm. Salvos of cannon, patriotic speeches, parades and fraternal embraces characterized these celebrations which the refugees were compelled to enter into with the greater spirit because they were under the suspicion of being reactionary.¹⁶³ Adet later refers to the unfavorable impression made by these fêtes upon the American people, who were accustomed to speak "of their triumphs and their defeats, of their hopes and their fears with the same indifference."¹⁶⁴

Societies were formed among the refugees in the principal

¹⁵⁹ Garran-Coulon, *op. cit.*, 380-381.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, iv, 427.

¹⁶¹ *Actes et Mémoires concernant les Négociations qui ont eu lieu entre la France et les États-Unis de l'Amérique, depuis 1793, jusqu'à la Conclusion de la Convention du 30 Septembre, 1800*, i, 233.

¹⁶² Garran-Coulon, *op. cit.*, iv, 427-433.

¹⁶³ *Débats entre les accusateurs et les accusés, dans l'affaire des colonies*, iv, 82.

¹⁶⁴ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 770.

cities and public meetings were held. The societies, particularly of Philadelphia, New York and Baltimore, were in close communication chiefly for the exchange of what the French officials considered pernicious opinions and plans.¹⁶⁵ In New York the radical republican element was strong because of the presence there of Genet and the cordial support given him by Governor Clinton, whose daughter he later married. In Philadelphia, the mayor, Matthew Clarkson, was also an ardent Republican¹⁶⁶ but he does not seem to have interfered with the meetings of the French creoles. He did, however, prohibit the wearing of the white cockade, the emblem of the royalists, and he brought pressure to bear upon the priests of the city to prevent the holding of a service in memory of Louis XVI.¹⁶⁷

A number of French newspapers were printed in the various large cities for creole readers. Most of them were short-lived. The two most important were the *Journal de la Révolution de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, begun by Tanguy-la-Boissière in Santo Domingo and transferred by him to New York; and the *Courrier de la France et ses Colonies* published by Gaterau of Cap Français, an eccentric individual twice exiled from Santo Domingo.¹⁶⁸ Both papers were if not openly counter-revolutionary, at least lukewarm in their republican sentiments.¹⁶⁹ Both were accused of attacks on Genet and of distorting French and Santo Domingan news, and thereby poisoning American public opinion.¹⁷⁰

The French exiles formed almost a state within a state, having little to do with American affairs, in many cases refusing to learn the English language,¹⁷¹ associating only

¹⁶⁵ *Conspirations, Trahisons et Calomnies dévoilées et dénoncées par plus de mille Français, Réfugiés au Continent de l'Amérique*, ii, 27, 34.

¹⁶⁶ Garran-Coulon, *op. cit.*, iv, 433.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, iv, 449-450.

¹⁶⁸ Garran-Coulon, *op. cit.*, iv, 313. A file of the latter journal is to be found in the library of the Boston Athenaeum.

¹⁶⁹ *Débats entre les accusateurs et les accusés dans l'affaire des colonies*, i, 344.

¹⁷⁰ Garran-Coulon, *op. cit.*, iv, 313.

¹⁷¹ Liancourt, *Voyage dans les États-Unis d'Amérique*, i, 162.

with their own compatriots, and interested solely in their own intrigues and in events in France and Santo Domingo. The attitude of the American government seems to have been to look with tolerance upon the expression of all shades of opinion among the French, interfering only when absolutely necessary to prevent the overturning of the laws of the country. Just what effect the presence of these refugees had upon American public opinion is difficult to determine but it would seem probable that the turbulence and lawlessness of certain sections of this alien mass must have contributed to turning the more sober-minded of the American people against the excesses of the French Revolution and must have paved the way for the break in cordial relations between France and the United States which occurred just at the end of the eighteenth century.

Immigration from Santo Domingo did not, of course, stop with the fall of Cap Français. The stream was more or less constant until the year 1805 when Dessalines sent forth the decree that the whites should be utterly destroyed in the island of Santo Domingo. Genet's successors complain that the refugees "busy the Agents of the Republic more than do the necessary and essential duties of their positions."¹⁷² Fauchet planned in March, 1794, to rid himself of the expense of supporting the refugees in the United States by offering them a free passage to France¹⁷³ and at the end of the year he announced that the last vessel was ready to sail for France, after which no more aid would be given by the French minister to the Santo Domingan colonists.¹⁷⁴ But he still had to meet the problem of granting permission to the creoles to return to Santo Domingo. If he granted permission indiscriminately, many would return to aid the English in wresting the island from France and re-establishing slavery there. If he refused permission to all, he would deprive France of the last hope of regaining control of the colony. As time passed, how-

¹⁷² *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 614.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, ii, 325.

¹⁷⁴ *The General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, November 22, 1794.

ever, the more turbulent element was drained off, going either to France or Santo Domingo, while those who remained settled down and were absorbed into the mass of the American people.

Their influence was felt, in certain sections at least, upon the economic life of the United States. All the principal Southern cities were affected to a greater or less extent by the incoming of Santo Domingan slave-owners.¹⁷⁵ In Baltimore the wealth and population of the city was increased by the influx of immigrants. The stimulus was seen in the growth of market-gardening, an occupation in which the French engaged.¹⁷⁶ New arts and methods of cultivation were introduced and trade was stimulated by the increase in capital.¹⁷⁷ De Beaujour who visited the United States in the early nineteenth century refers to the refugees of Santo Domingo who "have established in the United States other useful manufactures and have given to industry as to agriculture, a great impulse; the happy effects of their immigration will be felt for a long time in this land."¹⁷⁸

More spectacular was the effect of the revolutionary movement in Santo Domingo upon the course of slavery sentiment in the Southern United States. Many of the colonists who fled from the French island brought with them their slaves, and other mulattoes and negroes made the journey independently to escape persecution and death. The liveliest apprehension was excited in the minds of the slave-owners that these negroes, settled through the South in Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston and New Orleans, might disseminate among the slaves the revolutionary principles which had wrought such havoc in Santo Domingo.¹⁷⁹ For over thirty years every insurrection among the slaves was attributed to the influence of Santo Domingan negroes.

¹⁷⁵ Drewry, *Slave Insurrections in Virginia*, 118.

¹⁷⁶ Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Voyage aux États-Unis de l'Amérique, 1793-1798*, 89.

¹⁷⁷ Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, 140.

¹⁷⁸ De Beaujour, *Aperçu des États-Unis au commencement du XIX^e siècle*, 101.

¹⁷⁹ Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 8.

The fear of the Southern planter can be seen in the following news-item:

They write from Charleston (S. C.) that the NEGROES have become very insolent, in so much that the citizens are alarmed, and the militia keep a constant guard. It is said that the St. Domingo negroes have sown those seeds of revolt, and that a magazine has been attempted to be broken open.¹⁸⁰

Five years later, in the spring of 1798, Charleston was again stirred by the news of a "conspiracy of several French Negroes to fire the City, and to act here as they had formerly done at St. Domingo."¹⁸¹ The Gabriel Prosser insurrection of 1800 from this same apprehension was attributed to French influence.¹⁸²

It was the fear of a repetition in the Southern States of the scenes which "wrapped in flame and drenched in blood the beautiful island" of Santo Domingo,¹⁸³ that dominated the Southern planters and dictated for fifty years the American policy toward Haiti. Fauchet was a true prophet when he saw in 1795 that the negro control of the island of Santo Domingo had established "an eternal seed of repulsion" between the United States and the liberated French colony.¹⁸⁴

CHAPTER IV

THE UNITED STATES AND TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE

From 1793 when war was declared between France and Great Britain to 1798, when France and the United States broke off friendly relations, the most important question facing the United States in its dealings with the island of Santo Domingo was in regard to its trade with that island. There was no interest in political relations with the French colony. The only desire was to absorb the trade which war with England, the mistress of the seas, had compelled France to forego. And in the main the desire was ful-

¹⁸⁰ *The New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, October 16, 1793.

¹⁸¹ *St George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, February 23, 1798.

¹⁸² Drewry, *op. cit.*, 120. Woodson, *op. cit.*, 156.

¹⁸³ Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, i, 578.

¹⁸⁴ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 565.

filled.¹⁸⁵ France, forced during the period to rely on the United States for a large proportion of its own food supply, was unable to take any steps toward the provisioning of its colonies, while the carrying trade between the French West Indies and Europe also fell into American hands.¹⁸⁶

But, though the fundamental economic interdependence of the two countries forced the commerce of the French colonies into American avenues of trade, many attempts were made by the two European nations most interested to divert to their own advantage this profitable commerce. England at the end of 1793 made an attempt to end completely American trade with the French West Indies,¹⁸⁷ an attempt which almost brought war with the United States and from which she was compelled to recede. The treaty negotiated by Jay in 1794 was England's pledge that, while she might place annoying restrictions on American trade with the French colonies, she would not again attempt to prohibit it entirely.

The agreement reached by the United States with Great Britain in the Jay Treaty was displeasing to France who had expected active assistance from its former ally or at least a benevolent neutrality hardly to be distinguished from active participation in the war. Disappointed in this expectation and angry because of the failure of the United States to live up to the treaty obligations entered into in 1778 which guaranteed French possession of her West India islands, France entered upon a policy of retaliation which bore hard on the Santo Domingan trade. The lengths to which this policy had gone by 1797 was shown in a letter written by the Commissioners of Santo Domingo to the minister of marine in February of that year:

that having found no resource in finance, and knowing the unfriendly disposition of the Americans, and to avoid perishing in distress, they had armed for cruizing; and that already 87 cruisers were at sea; and that for three months preceding, the administration had been enriched, with the product of those prizes. . . . They felicitate themselves that American

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 259, 566.

¹⁸⁶ Adams, *History of the United States of America*, iii, 324.

¹⁸⁷ Hildreth, *op. cit.*, iv, 481.

vessels were daily taken; and declare that they had learnt by divers persons from the continent, that the Americans were perfidious, corrupt, the friends of England, and that therefore their vessels no longer entered the French ports, unless carried in by force.¹⁸⁸

This suicidal policy was pursued without regard to the interests of the colony and would have been even more disastrous than it was if it had applied beyond the confines of French control. But in the sections held by the English and in the South, where Rigaud, an influential mulatto general, had through negro troops become dominant, American commerce was welcomed and protected.¹⁸⁹

In America the same feeling that had manifested itself against England in 1794, was aroused against France by these depredations on American commerce. When every attempt at diplomatic action had failed an act was passed, June 13, 1798, suspending commercial relations with France and preparations for war followed.

This event found France incapable of taking any steps in defence of Santo Domingo. The action of the Commissioners in alienating both the whites and the mulattoes from the French cause had brought about the downfall of the white supremacy in the island. Both Spain and England made an attempt to occupy the place left vacant by France, but both were foiled by the character of the country and the genius of the greatest leader whom the negro race has ever produced.

Born a slave, Toussaint Louverture, by his own ability, raised himself to supreme command of the French forces in Santo Domingo by his own initiative, though under the apparent direction of the French officials in the island. Upon his entrance into the French service in 1794, he was given an important command in the French forces. It was largely due to his assistance and that of his negro troops that the Spanish and English were in turn driven from the French part of the island in which they had gotten a foot-

¹⁸⁸ *Actes et Mémoires concernant les Négociations qui ont eu lieu entre la France et les États-Unis de l'Amérique, depuis 1793, jusqu'à la Conclusion de la Convention du 30 Septembre, 1800* iii, 384.

¹⁸⁹ *General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, May 27, 1794; January 31, 1797; April 17, 1797.

hold. Having fulfilled both tasks, he next faced the problem of freeing himself from even the semblance of French control. By October, 1798, this was, to all intents and purposes, accomplished. General Hédouville, one of the ablest of the French diplomats, sent by the Directory as a last means of checking the growing power of Toussaint, was expelled by the negro leader from the island. At his departure there remained in the whole island only one French official, Roume, Civil Commissioner for the Spanish part, whom Toussaint soon won over and used as a tool.¹⁹⁰

In view of the threatened war between France and the United States, and the practical independence of Santo Domingo, the question of the relation of the United States to the French colony was an interesting one. Should the suspension of commercial relations with all the French possessions apply to this colony in revolt? Would the war against France bring an attack upon the island with a view of adding it to American territory? Should Toussaint be encouraged in his course of establishing a black empire in the West Indies? These were some of the problems agitating American statesmen in the summer of 1798.

Various attempts to foreshadow the American policy are to be found in the writings of the nineties. Genet, in October, 1793, prophesied that it was only a question of time until "the islands of America would become what nature wished them to be independent of Europe and under the protection of the people of the continent from which they have been detached."¹⁹¹

Fauchet writing in February, 1795, after noting the economic dependence of the colonies upon the United States, added: "The colonies whom war exposes to famine, ought to form the closest relations with a people who from fortnight to fortnight can satisfy their needs. If the French colonies had continued their prosperous increase, there is no doubt that this federation would have been consummated. America favored it."¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ This brief résumé of conditions in Santo Domingo is based on Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo*.

¹⁹¹ *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, ii, 259.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, ii, 564.

During 1797 and 1798, John Quincy Adams and William Vans Murray, both on diplomatic missions in Europe, frequently recurred in their correspondence to the future of the French West Indies. Adams' favorite proposal was to make them "free and independent, in close alliance and under the guarantee of the United States."¹⁹³ In support of this proposal he added:

The natural connection of the West Indies is with the American and not with the European continent, and such a connection as I have in my mind, a more natural connection than that of metropolis and colony, or in other words master and servant. In close alliance, leaving them as to their government totally to themselves, we can protect their independence, furnish them with necessities, and stipulate for the exclusive carriage of their produce.¹⁹⁴

Murray, on the other hand, proposed that in the war with France which was then threatening, the coöperation of the northern powers, the German states, Sweden and Denmark, should be secured by giving them a "large participation in the West India possessions."¹⁹⁵ "The basis is, that it is to our interest to divide the West Indian colonies, if any are taken by joint means among the *combined* powers. . . . that these *colonies* must fall, if we have a war, and not to the United States certainly, as not being desirable, and as placing us too much on a dependence for their safety on Great Britain, besides the incompatibility of colonies with the genius of both government and nation; that in this view of what will probably happen we might convert what I think the probable conquests to auxiliary purposes, in raising friendships and a coöperation against the enemy on the continent."¹⁹⁶

That an attack on the French colonies was seriously considered is shown by a letter from Harrison Gray Otis, chairman of the committee on internal defence, to Hamilton, asking; "Shall the President be authorized to attack, capture, and hold all or any of the French West India

¹⁹³ Ford, *Writings of Adams*, ii, 336.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 336.

¹⁹⁵ *Letters of William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams, 1797-1803*, 370.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 384.

islands as an indemnity for the spoliations committed on our trade?"¹⁹⁷ While Hamilton in a memorandum submitted to Oliver Wolcott, secretary of the treasury, had already raised a similar question. "Is not the independence of the French Colonies under the guarantee of the United States to be aimed at? If it is, there cannot be too much promptness in opening negotiations for the purpose."¹⁹⁸ The American policy, however, was not definitely determined until action was forced by the appeal of Toussaint Louverture to President Adams for aid.

Though the French had been expelled from Santo Domingo, Toussaint did not find himself without opposition. The mulattoes, under their able leader, André Rigaud, controlled the South and certain sections of the West Province, while Toussaint and his negro followers did not have complete possession even of the North where their strength lay. Between the mulattoes and negroes there raged and has continued to rage as bitter a feeling of race hatred as either had ever felt against the whites, a feeling which has been the basis of most of the conflicts which have convulsed the island since Toussaint and Rigaud measured their strength in 1799.

Toussaint was overwhelmingly superior in numbers but jealousies among the blacks weakened his strength and the complete lack of necessary provisions and equipment prevented his making an attack upon the mulatto forces. Rigaud's army on the other hand was

well fed, well clothed, and well paid. The uninterrupted trade he has carried on from the South with St. Thomas, the Continent of America, and the Island of Jamaica, has supplied him with Plenty of Provisions, Clotheing, and Ammunition. The arbitrary and oppressive Contributions he has levied from the Inhabitants of the South, and the Application of all the publick Revenue, for several Years past, to his own private Purposes, have given him a great Command of Money. His Infantry are well disciplined, and his Cavalry the best in the Colony.¹⁹⁹

Toussaint had the advantage of acting nominally as the representative of French authority, through his use of

¹⁹⁷ Hamilton, *Writings of Hamilton*, vi, 378.

¹⁹⁸ Lodge, *Works of Hamilton*, x, 289.

¹⁹⁹ *Letters of Toussaint Louverture and of Edward Stevens, 1798-1800*, 76.

Roume, the Particular Agent. But the French had already seen that it was to their advantage that the island should remain in a state of anarchy until French troops could be sent over to reconquer it. And so, though Rigaud was called a rebel and an outlaw, all the active assistance that the French government could render was given to him.²⁰⁰

With the two parties so evenly matched, it would take but little external pressure to swing the balance to either side and for that external pressure Toussaint looked to the United States. England, at war with France, might be expected to assist but Jamaica was too uncomfortably close for the British government to look with any complaisance upon the establishment of a strong negro state in Santo Domingo. The United States was far enough away to feel relatively secure as to its own slaves, it was at war with France and anxious to neutralize the power which France had on this side of the Atlantic, and it had watched with anger the harm inflicted upon its merchant marine by French corsairs who found an abiding place in the harbors of Santo Domingo.

Rigaud might have expected aid from the United States, for he had fought in the siege of Savannah as had many of his mulatto chiefs, and he had protected American commerce at a time when the French commissioners were making the most savage attacks upon it.²⁰¹ But he was forced by circumstances to act in harmony with France and independence of France was a *sine qua non* of American assistance.

The American Embargo Act of June 1798, putting an end to all trade with the French possessions, bore with especial hardship upon Toussaint. He had to look to the United States for food and munitions and when the supply of these was in large measure cut off, his army was rendered almost powerless. As long as he was under French control he could do nothing, but just two weeks after General Hédouville's forced departure he took a step which marks the beginning of his rupture with France. On the sixth

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁰¹ *General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, January 31, 1797.

of November, 1798, probably with the concurrence of the American consul, he wrote to President Adams, promising that if commercial relations should be resumed with Santo Domingo, he would assure to the American vessels trading with the island, protection and safety, thereby setting aside the French ordinances in regard to American commerce.²⁰² It was not so wide a departure from French policy as it might seem, for Hédouville had gone almost as far in his promise to protect American vessels trading with Santo Domingo, even if war should break out between France and the United States,²⁰³ but it was the first step in the formation of an alliance between the negro chief and the American government.

The American policy was outlined by the secretary of state, Timothy Pickering, in a letter to Mayer, American consul at Cap Français, written probably before the receipt of Toussaint's appeal. The most significant portion of the letter read as follows:

You will take notice that the act of Congress of the last session prohibiting intercourse with France and her dominions is limited to places *under the acknowledged power of France*, consequently if the inhabitants of St. Domingo have ceased to acknowledge that power, there will not, as I conceive, be any bar to the prompt and extensive renewal of trade between the United States and the ports of that Island. Our merchants, I understand, are already preparing to renew that commerce, although the intelligence of Hédouville's deposition arrived but yesterday. The putting down all privateers of the island, at least the restraining them from touching Americans, I look for as a natural consequence of the revolution. Good policy doubtless suggests to the Chiefs, and especially to the amiable and respectable Toussaint, the commander in chief, a system of peace towards Great Britain and her dependencies as well as towards the United States.²⁰⁴

Toussaint had, in the mean time, already dispatched his personal representative, Bunel, with Mayer, the American consul, to Philadelphia, where they arrived about the

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 66–67.

²⁰³ Benton, *Abridgments of the Debates in Congress*, ii, 336. *General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, May 14, 1798.

²⁰⁴ State Department Archives. Pickering to Mayer, November 30, 1798.

middle of December, 1798.²⁰⁵ Negotiations were at once begun and in January a bill was introduced into Congress permitting the president to open by proclamation the Santo Domingan trade whenever depredations upon American commerce should have ceased. After a good deal of discussion, the bill was passed over Republican opposition. Jefferson felt a certain lukewarmness among the Southern congressmen in regard to establishing trade relations with Toussaint's subjects but the opposition seems to have been drawn on party rather than sectional lines. "Even South Carolinians in the H. of R. voted for it."²⁰⁶

The chief objections to the bill were that it would aggravate still further our already strained relations with France and that it would tend to make the island independent. The Federalists insisted that all they wanted was to extend trade and to suppress privateering. That Santo Domingo would thereby gain her independence was a matter with which they had no concern. The president was most definite in stating his opinion that "independence is the worst and most dangerous condition they (the West India islands) can be in for the United States."²⁰⁷ A fair statement of the Federalist position was given by Wolcott in a letter to Samuel Smith:

Nothing appears to have been proposed, discussed or settled, between the British and Toussaint, respecting the independence of the island, and with this question the United States will not interfere. Our object is to gain a trade on safe principles; questions of interior policy and government are to be settled by the people of the island, and others concerned, in their own way. . . . The United States will doubtless be suspected by France of a policy of interference, but they will be suspected unjustly; as before asserted, the object of the United States is to extend their trade and to suppress privateering.²⁰⁸

The Federalist leaders probably felt that even if the French colony did throw off its allegiance, the condition would be only temporary and that as soon as the war was

²⁰⁵ *General Advertiser*, Philadelphia, December 20, 1798.

²⁰⁶ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, vii, 348, 349.

²⁰⁷ *The Life and Works of John Adams*, viii, 634.

²⁰⁸ Gibbs, *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams*, ii, 228.

over, France would at once regain control of her colony. Hamilton seems to have had this in mind, when he wrote:

No committal on the independence of St. Domingo, no guaranty, no formal treaty—*nothing that can rise up in judgment*. It will be enough to let Toussaint be assured verbally, but explicitly, that upon his declaration of independence a commercial intercourse will be opened, &c.²⁰⁹

The act was passed February 9, 1799, and ten days later Edward Stevens' name was before the Senate as Consul-General to Santo Domingo.²¹⁰ Dr. Stevens was an admirable choice. A native of the West Indies and a relative of Hamilton, he added to native keenness and intelligence a knowledge of West Indian conditions and problems.²¹¹ During his two years' residence in Santo Domingo he exercised considerable influence over Toussaint, while his tact and powers of conciliation were called into play to avert the suspicions of the negro leader, to gain concessions for American shipping, and especially to bring about united action between Toussaint and the English.

Almost at once upon Stevens' arrival in the islands in April, 1799, his instructions to secure the suppression of the privateers of Santo Domingo, the protection of American lives and property and the right of entry into Santo Dominican ports of American vessels both public and private, were carried out, thanks to the eagerness of Toussaint to conciliate the United States.²¹² His next task was to put through negotiations granting similar privileges to the English in Santo Domingo.

Steps had already been taken before the departure of Dr. Stevens for Santo Domingo, by Rufus King, the American ambassador in London, to come to an understanding with the English government in regard to negotiations with Toussaint. Coöperation with England was necessary so long as the United States was at war with France and trade privileges with Santo Domingo would be valueless if, in secur-

²⁰⁹ Hamilton, *Writings of Hamilton*, vi, 395.

²¹⁰ Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, vii, 365.

²¹¹ Lodge, *Alexander Hamilton*, 289-290.

²¹² *Letters of Toussaint Louverture and of Edward Stevens, 1798-1800*, 70.

ing them, the enmity of England was incurred. As Adams said: "They [the English] are so deeply interested that they ought to be consulted, and the commerce of the island is not worth to us the risk of any dispute with them."²¹³

King found the English cabinet also convinced that concerted action between England and the United States was of the first importance.²¹⁴ "It is certain *that Great Britain desires to act with us, and we may be sure of her coöperation if we will concur in her Plans. She will even risk something to obtain our concurrence, but she will act without us in case we disagree as to the terms of a joint coöperation.*"²¹⁵ The English suggestion was that an exclusive company composed of English and Americans be formed to whom should be given the monopoly of the trade with Santo Domingo. But this was not in accordance with American customs and traditions. It was finally agreed that General Maitland and Colonel Grant to whom the English mission had been entrusted, should be left uninstructed but should stop in the United States on their way to Santo Domingo, there to determine upon a course of action in consultation with the members of the American government. The conferences ended with the abandonment of the English proposal and the adoption by the British envoys of the policy already entered upon by the United States.²¹⁶

Toussaint's relations with the English were peculiar. They had come to Santo Domingo at the call of the French colonists to conquer the island and to restore slavery. As a consequence they were hated and feared by the negroes. But Toussaint had seen that, as long as England was at war with France, English influence might be used as a counterpoise to French. Accordingly the terms of evacuation which he granted to the English forces in 1798 were much too easy to meet the approval of General Hédouville.²¹⁷ In addition by a secret treaty he granted them extensive rights of trade. But the indiscretion of the British govern-

²¹³ *The Life and Works of John Adams*, viii, 657.

²¹⁴ *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, ii, 502.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 503.

²¹⁶ *The Life and Works of John Adams*, viii, 639-640, n.

²¹⁷ Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 271-273.

ment in publishing this treaty and the comments upon it by the English press had caused Toussaint much embarrassment and had made him rather unwilling to enter into negotiations with the English a second time.²¹⁸

It was indeed dangerous for him to do so, for the report that he was holding conferences with an English general awakened fear on the part of his troops that he was selling the island to the English and shook his power, which was not too securely established.²¹⁹ Neither did the English enter whole heartedly into the negotiations. Their fear of a negro insurrection in their own West India islands seems to have been stronger than their desire to deprive France of her colony and they apparently adopted the French policy of preventing either party in Santo Domingo from gaining the ascendancy.

Under these circumstances it required all of Dr. Stevens' powers of conciliation to carry the negotiations through to a successful conclusion. The conferences at Gonaïves where Toussaint and General Maitland met were reported as "very stormy."²²⁰ Roume, the French agent, was present merely as a spectator but gave his consent to this act of independence to prevent the colony from perishing of hunger. Neither did Stevens appear as a signatory to the convention, though he was chiefly instrumental in bringing it about and its advantages accrued to the United States as well as to Great Britain. The convention, signed June 13, 1799, included the principal points already agreed upon in Philadelphia; a continued armistice between the three countries, protection from French privateers for English and American merchant vessels, the right of entrance into the ports of Santo Domingo for English and American war vessels, and freedom of trade for their merchant vessels with the island.²²¹ Dr. Stevens was compelled to act temporarily as British Agent because the suspicions of the negro troops had been aroused to such

²¹⁸ *Letters of Toussaint Louverture and of Edward Stevens*, 75.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

²²⁰ Ardouin, *Études sur l'Histoire d'Haiti*, iv, 48.

²²¹ The text of the treaty is to be found in the State Department Archives.

an extent that Toussaint dared not admit an English official into the island.²²²

Before the news of the signing of the convention reached the United States, President Adams issued his proclamation of June 26, 1799, opening to American trade the whole coast of Santo Domingo from Monte Cristi on the north to Petit Goave on the west, excluding the south which was under the control of Rigaud.²²³ War had already broken out between the two races and the advantages of Toussaint's policy were at once apparent. His army had been destitute and unable to move because of lack of supplies but munitions of war and food supplies quickly began to flow into the island from Jamaica and the United States.

Still more assistance from the United States was necessary however, if Toussaint was to bring the south into complete subjection. A successful attack upon Rigaud's position at Jacmel was impossible without naval aid to prevent the provisioning of the garrison from the neighboring islands. Of men of war Toussaint had none since the seizure by the English of a squadron of six armed vessels which he had sent south with arms and ammunition, on the pretext that it was bound against Jamaica.²²⁴

Toussaint accordingly appealed to the United States for the coöperation of the Santo Domingan squadron stationed off the island to protect American trade.²²⁵ The request was granted. The *General Greene*, in particular, assisted in the siege of Jacmel and even took an active part in the shelling of Rigaud's forts.²²⁶ It was due to the assistance of the American vessels that Toussaint was able to starve Rigaud's forces out of Jacmel and with its fall, March 11, 1800, his ultimate victory was assured. By midsummer of that year the pacification of the south was completed.²²⁷ President Adams had already, by a second proclamation,

²²² *Letters of Toussaint Lowverture and of Edward Stevens*, 75.

²²³ *The Life and Works of John Adams*, ix, 177.

²²⁴ *Letters of Toussaint Lowverture and of Edward Stevens*, 91.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

²²⁶ Allen, *Our Naval War with France*, 180.

²²⁷ *Letters of Toussaint Lowverture and of Edward Stevens*, 100.

May 9, 1800, opened all the ports in French Santo Domingo to American trade.²²⁸

In the meantime the independence which the Americans had expected had been asserted. As early as June, 1799, Stevens foresaw the end of even nominal French power in Santo Domingo.²²⁹ In February, 1800, he wrote; "All connection with France will soon be broken off."²³⁰ And on April 19, Toussaint took the decisive step, arresting Roume and assuming civil as well as military power.²³¹

One further step was necessary to make Toussaint's position secure against French attack. Fearing that France might gain a foothold in Spanish Santo Domingo, which in 1795 had been ceded to France, he resolved to add that to his conquests. By February, 1801, it was done and he was master of the whole island.²³²

Toussaint did not neglect the economic development of the island. Compulsory labor was restored. The exports rose almost to their old value and both Toussaint and the foreign merchants grew rich from the profits of the trade which sprang quickly into existence. It was the Americans on whom all the black chief's favors were showered. They built temporary homes among the ruins of Cap Français and passed their days in safety among Toussaint's rough soldiers.²³³ Commercial regulations were adapted to suit their desires and their advice was sought in political affairs. Altogether an independent negro state seemed to be established under the aegis of the stars and stripes.

CHAPTER V

SANTO DOMINGO IN NAPOLEON'S COLONIAL POLICY

During the years 1799 and 1800 the United States pursued a double policy, lending active support to Toussaint Louverture and at the same time continuing the negotiations

²²⁸ *The Life and Works of John Adams*, ix, 178.

²²⁹ *Letters of Toussaint Louverture and of Edward Stevens*, 77.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

²³² Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 283-287.

²³³ Rainsford, *St. Domingo, or an Historical, Political and Military Sketch of the Black Republic*, 32.

with France which led to the Treaty of Morfontaine, signed September 30, 1800, by which Toussaint was abandoned, a course of action which Hamilton thought hardly consistent with good faith.²³⁴ For a year longer England stood between the negro chief and France but the Peace of Amiens, which brought to an end war in Europe, left Napoleon free to deal with the colony as he would.

His policy as it shows itself in his correspondence, embraced the building up of a great colonial empire on the American continent. For the success of this policy the possession of both Santo Domingo and Louisiana was necessary. The failure to secure either meant the failure of the whole scheme. Santo Domingo was the heart of the projected empire. It was the richest colony France had ever possessed and its loss would destroy her prestige. Still more, its strategic position made it an absolutely essential base for military and naval operations.

But just as essential was it to secure possession of Louisiana if the old colonial system was to be restored; for the French West Indies were dependent upon external sources for their food supply while the experience of a hundred years had proved that that source could not be found in France but only on the American continent. As long as the islands had to depend on the United States for food, the connection between them was bound to grow closer, while the supremacy of France was threatened in peace and overturned in war. It was to build up an empire on this side of the Atlantic that should add to the prosperity of France and in war should be self-sufficing, that Napoleon made peace first with the United States and then with Great Britain.²³⁵

That America should have been willing to aid Napoleon in his undertaking was due in part to a failure to grasp the effect of his policy upon American interests. There seems to have been no widespread enthusiasm in the support given to Toussaint Louverture. Aid was sent to him be-

²³⁴ Lodge, *Works of Hamilton*, x, 345.

²³⁵ Roloff, *Die Kolonialpolitik Napoleons I*, 61. Turner, *The Policy of France Toward the Mississippi Valley in the Period of Washington and Adams*.

cause he was a convenient instrument to use in the struggle against France. That his success was essential to prevent the development of a much-dreaded French empire on the banks of the Mississippi did not begin to be realized until almost two years after the Treaty of Morfontaine, too late for American action to have been effective.

The English policy was in closer harmony with their own interests. No sooner had peace been made than they were willing even to aid their enemy in reconquering Santo Domingo. It was fear of the effects of an independent negro state upon their own slave-owning colonies in the West Indies that led them to this policy; but it would have added much to their prosperity if America had absorbed all of Napoleon's energy and the peace of Europe had been preserved.²³⁶

As soon as the Treaty of Amiens left Napoleon free, he began his preparations for the great expedition which under his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, was to bring Santo Domingo into obedience and which was then to proceed to the conquest of Louisiana.

Toussaint early realized that the American government had resolved to give him no aid against France. In July, 1801, Dr. Stevens was succeeded by Tobias Lear as Consul-General of the United States in Santo Domingo. His reception was the occasion of a display of ill temper by Toussaint, because he had not brought with him a special letter from the president to the negro general, a courtesy expected by Toussaint and one which the American government would have accorded a year before.²³⁷ The change in American policy would have been observed even by one less keen-sighted than Toussaint. Lear wrote four months after his arrival in the island: "Not a single line of intercourse between the Government of the U. S. and this. Not a single line of communication to me from my

²³⁶ The most complete discussion of Napoleon's relation to Santo Domingo as it bears upon American history, is to be found in Adams' *History of the United States of America*. Roloff in his *Die Kolonialpolitik Napoleons I*, gives a more balanced account of Napoleon's policy in regard to Santo Domingo as it stands in relation to his whole colonial policy.

²³⁷ State Department Archives, Lear to Madison, July 17, 1801.

Government. . . . No public Ships or Vessels belonging to the U. S. on the coasts or in the harbors as heretofore."²³⁸ It required a great deal of tact to preserve the friendly relations which the United States had promised Napoleon so soon to break off.

The arrival of Leclerc's expedition was to be the signal for the suspension of trade with Toussaint and the rendering of active assistance to the French army.²³⁹ The president cautioned the American representatives in the island carefully to avoid any action which "might hazard the confidence or good will of the French Government," and to be "guided by a Strict conformity to all legitimate regulations emanating from that authority, as well as from the friendly relations now Subsisting between the two nations."²⁴⁰ That Toussaint continued, however, to secure arms and provisions from American merchants during his struggle with Leclerc is certain, despite Madison's very vigorous denial that a single American citizen had engaged in "commerce of any sort with Toussaint and his adherents," after the arrival of the French armament.²⁴¹

American merchants viewed the coming of the French forces with anxiety. They feared that they would be compelled to forfeit all the advantages which they had enjoyed under Toussaint, and they were right. Napoleon's instructions to Leclerc concluded with the order to admit American commerce to the island until its conquest but then "the French alone shall be admitted and the old regulations of the period before the revolution shall again be put into force."²⁴² But Leclerc's need of provisions which could be obtained only from American merchants was so great that for the first two months he was compelled to retain Toussaint's regulations and to postpone the restoration of the restrictive commercial policy of former days. He was even forced to recognize Lear temporarily, although the

²³⁸ State Department Archives, Lear to Madison, November 9, 1801.

²³⁹ Roloff, *op. cit.*, 249.

²⁴⁰ State Department Archives, Lear to Dandridge, April 11, 1802.

²⁴¹ *The Writings of James Madison*, vi, 458.

²⁴² Roloff, *op. cit.*, 254.

French government had declined previously to recognize American consuls in their colonial possessions.²⁴³ But as soon as conditions permitted the step, Lear received his dismissal, returning home in April, 1802.²⁴⁴

Leclerc felt a special dislike for Americans, partly because of the aid they had given to Toussaint and partly because of the difficulty he had in dealing with them and the high prices they demanded for all their supplies.²⁴⁵ His grumblings against the Yankee traders were repeated in all the American ports and caused much trouble for Pichon, who, as French minister in the United States, had to assist in the provisioning of the French forces in Santo Domingo.²⁴⁶ On March 31, 1802, Leclerc felt himself strong enough to enter upon a policy of restriction in regard to foreign commerce, and on that date he issued an ordinance, by which only four ports were left open to trade and there foreign merchants were to pay export and import duties of 20 per cent of the value of their cargoes while the French were subject to duties only half as high. But he found that he had overestimated the amount of provisions to be secured from French sources and in June and again in September he was obliged to modify his regulations to permit the freer entrance of food stuffs.²⁴⁷ Despite the restrictions, the establishment of peace resulted in a decided increase in foreign shipping. Of American trade, it might be said that it would always exist with Santo Domingo. Regulations and policies might increase or lessen it but they could never entirely end it.

As to the success of the expedition, when it started from France, twenty thousand strong, it had every prospect of carrying to a successful conclusion the plan of action which Napoleon had outlined step by step. But there was one foe on which Napoleon had not counted. In May yellow fever made its appearance and through the hot months

²⁴³ State Department Archives, Lear to Madison, February 6, 1802.

²⁴⁴ State Department Archives, Lear to Leclerc, April 10, 1802.

²⁴⁵ Adams, *Historical Essays*, 140. Roloff, *op. cit.*, 100.

²⁴⁶ Adams, *Historical Essays*, 141.

²⁴⁷ Roloff, *op. cit.*, 101-102.

that followed Leclerc's army vanished before it. In July Leclerc wrote that he was losing one hundred and sixty men a day and before the end of the year twenty-nine thousand men had died.²⁴⁸ Leclerc himself succumbed in November and with his death French control was at an end. His successor, Rochambeau, held on for a year but he made no headway and he gradually lost what Leclerc had gained. The general's death had been decisive. Only at a cost of life impossible for France to afford, could Napoleon's vision of an American empire be realized. Napoleon's policy was at once reversed. Rochambeau was abandoned. Louisiana was sold to the United States. War was declared on England. The dream of a great French state on the Gulf of Mexico was at an end. Santo Domingo still remained nominally French but its reconquest was postponed until a more auspicious time.²⁴⁹ But the influence of Santo Domingo on Franco-American relations was not quite at an end.

Even before the departure of Rochambeau and the French troops, Santo Domingo had fallen under the control of one of Toussaint's lieutenants, of whom Sir Spenser St. John wrote; "The only good quality that Dessalines possessed was a sort of brute courage; in all else he was but an African savage, distinguished even among his countrymen for his superior ferocity and perfidy. He was incapable as an administrator, and treated the public revenue as his own private income."²⁵⁰ On January 1, 1804, the independence of the island was proclaimed and the old Indian name of Haiti was resumed to show the complete break with the past.

In September of that year an American agent was sent down to establish with Dessalines the friendly commercial relations which had been enjoyed by the United States

²⁴⁸ Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 340.

²⁴⁹ Roloff, who has made a most careful study from archival material of Napoleon's colonial policy, maintains, in opposition to most writers on the subject, that Napoleon never for a moment surrendered the hope of regaining Santo Domingo and that his plans were laid for its reconquest at the earliest possible moment.

²⁵⁰ St. John, *Haiti, or the Black Republic*, 77.

with Toussaint Louverture.²⁵¹ During the two years in which Dessalines held power commercial intercourse continued much as it had during the five years preceding. American merchants had never lost touch with the negroes since trade was first established with them in 1791. Leclerc, despite strenuous efforts, had not been able to break up the smuggling while under Rochambeau American vessels avoided the ports held by the French in order to trade with the negroes.²⁵² The declaration of independence served as a stimulus to this commerce, the profits from which were enormous.

In the fall of 1804 Jefferson was meditating action against Great Britain to protect the rights of neutrals upon the high seas. Such a course drove him into the arms of France and his desire to win favor with that nation led him to frown upon the Santo Domingan trade. In 1804 the French declared a paper blockade of Santo Domingo,²⁵³ to which the Americans replied by arming their merchant vessels and preparing to fight against any opposition.²⁵⁴ In October, 1804, John Quincy Adams found Jefferson determined to suppress trade with the island,²⁵⁵ but the most he was able to secure from Congress was a bill prohibiting merchantmen from arming for the West India trade and placing them under heavy bonds for good behavior.²⁵⁶ An amendment putting an end to all commerce with Santo Domingo was defeated by the casting vote of Burr.

The bill had little effect upon the trade with Santo Domingo. In the spring of 1805 a great fleet set out for Haiti with eighty cannon and seven hundred men. On the return of the flotilla in May a dinner was given in New York, toasts were drunk to the independence of Haiti and the friendship between the two nations was celebrated. This was too much for Napoleon and he instructed both Talleyrand and Turreau to write in vigorous terms de-

²⁵¹ Ardouin, *op. cit.*, vi, 108.

²⁵² Roloff, *op. cit.*, 115.

²⁵³ *Writings of James Madison*, vii, 136.

²⁵⁴ *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, i, 223.

²⁵⁵ Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, i, 314.

²⁵⁶ *New York Herald*, December 1, 1804.

manding that the trade should be stopped.²⁵⁷ Jefferson was anxious at that time to secure the Floridas by French intercession, and was ready to do anything to keep the good will of France. Accordingly in December, 1805, Dr. Logan introduced a bill into the senate to put an end to all commercial relations with Haiti.²⁵⁸ There was a strong opposition to the measure from the Federalists, partly on party grounds, partly because the Federalists represented the commercial classes whose interests would be injuriously affected by the bill, and partly because of their unwillingness to act in subservience to France.²⁵⁹ But despite the opposition the bill passed and on February 28, 1806, received the president's signature.

The prohibition was continued from year to year. In June, 1809, Livermore, a Federalist from Massachusetts, proposed that the trade with Santo Domingo be resumed because of its value and importance, but he was met with a storm of abuse from the Southern senators and his bill received only his own vote. Within a few months, however, by the lapse of the prohibiting enactments, trade with Haiti was quietly renewed.²⁶⁰

The support which Jefferson received in his attack upon the Santo Domingan trade was to a certain extent a party support, but there was another factor which was already potent though it had not as yet been avowed. The slavocracy of the South was already awakening to the danger which threatened the basis of its power and this fear found its expression in a desperate opposition to any measure which tended to strengthen the relations existing between the United States and the negro republic whose influence upon its own institutions was most bitterly dreaded.

²⁵⁷ *American State Papers. Foreign Relations*, ii, 726-727.

²⁵⁸ *Annals of Congress*, 9 Cong, 1 sess., 26.

²⁵⁹ Benton, *Abridgments of the Debates in Congress*, iii, 349-351, 360.

²⁶⁰ Hildreth, *op. cit.*, vi, 181-183.